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Cover Photo: Armenian Evangelical Church 175th Anniversary Logo designed by Michael Nahabet - Yearbook Inc. Cover design by Vahak Janbazian - Caspianseal.com.

For the Common Good

There are different kinds of gifts, but one Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

By **Zaven Khanjian**, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

There have always been staff devotionals at the AMAA headquarters. The pandemic structured and regularized the devotionals for us and Zoom added an opportunity to host gifted ministers and other guests from around the globe. Each of them shared a message anchored on the Word of God with the staff.

Recently, Rev. Jeremy Tovmassian of Chicago, Illinois shared a message with the AMAA global staff, introducing the above scripture, which in my mind connected all three subjects I pondered to cover today.

The repercussions of the calamitous 2020 Artsakh War devastated the Homeland and the Diaspora. The physical and psychic pain was so deep and entrenched that the social fabric of the nation was unprecedentedly fragmented. The ugly sceneries depicting hatred and anger toward perceived domestic enemies coupled with unbecoming language used in social media came to mirror a nation foreign to its culture, faith and morality.

The hysteric natural or instigated reaction is on a slide. Armenia's Prime Minister Pashinyan's resignation and snap parliamentary elections scheduled in June have helped subdue emotions. Cooler heads and time induced calmer minds are on the rise with hope resuscitating the masses. Our hope and prayer is for all to realize that properly addressed differences are not destructive but can be placed to **effective use for the common good**.

Thanks to its faithful donors and core convictions, the AMAA played its role in a high gear effort to reach out, sap the physical and psychological pain and help the country and its people rise to resiliency and revival.

The statement by United States President Joe Biden on April 24, 2021 acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, and complementing the almost unanimous voice of the United States Congress in 2019, had its healing effect, dampening the pain inflicted by the Artsakh War. Despite the absence of sanctions and demand for reparations from the statement, the fact that a major power came to join a world of nations preceding it to acknowledgment, helped boost the morale of Armenians worldwide.

Rationalizing our presence where Noah landed the Ark and where God placed our nation, we are bound to fulfill our end of the covenant with God and illuminate our surroundings. Neighbors should learn that we are not going away. We shall radiate God's goodness around in a resilient cultural Renaissance and expression of faith.

Peace and harmony are what we need with honest and civilized neighbors who acknowledge historical justice, take a deep introspective look and **commit to the common good of humanity**.

July 1, 2021 marks the 175th Anniversary of the founding of, as the founders consciously chose to call, the 'Evangelical Church of Armenia.' Often, we have covered each of the components making up the name.

Church is the body of Christ where believers individually come together as different parts of the body to worship an omnipotent Creator in holiness, worthy of the image of God.

Evangelical lays God's Word, the Holy Bible as the foundation of faith from where all wisdom flows and through which spiritual growth and nourishment is served. The Bible is the source, where the Good News of salvation received through the grace of God and the ultimate sacrifice of Christ is revealed.

Armenian is a testament of our identity. It rationalizes our share of faithfulness to God keeping our part of the covenant through Armenia's unique contribution as a nation, both to humanity and civilization.

That wholesome of **Evangelical Church of Armenia** remains part of God's unfathomable creation, who together with other parts **receive the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good**.

This issue of AMAA News that you are holding in your hands generously celebrates the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church and covers a host of diverse subjects hailing the accomplishments of the past, the contributions and short-comings of today and the expectations of tomorrow. A cabal of remarkable authors from within the Church and without have gracefully contributed to the subject. We value their opinion and thank them all.

There is a 96-year-old bank in California called Nazelie Elmassian. The bank abundantly issues free HUG COUPONS, 'good for one hug, redeemable from any participating human being.' There is one condition to receiving it, **you must use it for the common good**.

Common good is the manifestation of God's infinite love for you and me.



April 28, 2021

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ԱՆՏԻՄԱՆԻԿ ՀԱԳԱՔԱՐԱՐՁՆԵՐԻՆԵՐ

*The First Church Council of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Pera (Beyoglu), Istanbul, Turkey - 1850
Toubakji Hovsep, Sarkis Tarpiian, Sdepan Kurkjian, Khachadour Yeznagian, Dehr (Father) Vertaness, Pastor Simon Utujian, Hagop Mateossian, Saatji (Jamakordz) Akribas, M. Djilajian, Gadjoug Tateos, (One name is missing).*

Armenian Evangelical Church

A Brief History

By **Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian**

July 1, 2021 is the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church. The Armenian Evangelical World Council (AECWC) has appointed an anniversary steering committee to mark this milestone. One of the projects of the committee is the publication of a *Commemorative Volume* entitled **Hooshamadyan** in the Armenian language.

Hooshamadyan is comprised of four parts: *A Brief History of the Armenian Evangelical Church, Member Unions and Organizations of AECWC, Congratulatory Letters*, and an *Appendix*.

The first part of **Hooshamadyan** consists of the following five sections:

I. The Rise of the Armenian Evangelical Church

On July 1, 1846, thirty-seven Armenian men and three Armenian women established the Armenian Evangelical Church in Istanbul (then Constantinople). Four years later, on November 27, 1850, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Medjid granted formal recognition to the newly established Church.

An objective study of the events connected with the rise of Armenian Evangelicals reveals that the causes of

"separation" were not random, shallow and capricious. Rather, these causes were a direct outcome of the Armenian Renaissance in the 19th century. It was part of the great upsurge of Armenian intellectual spirit. There was a revival of thinking in the social, economic and religious realms. Some reform-minded Armenians in the Patriarchal Academy of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate of Istanbul insisted that the Armenian Apostolic Church should be revitalized. In 1836 these reformists established a secret society named *Barepashtoutian Miabanoutune* (The Society of Piety) in order to reform the church. They met the strong resistance and the op-

position of the Armenian ruling magnates and the patriarch.

Failure to reform the Church became the basic source of conflict. The reformists continued to push their demands, which provoked strong retaliation from the Armenian Patriarch Mateos Chookhajian. Persecution and suffering did not alienate the Armenian Evangelicals from the Mother Church. It was the act of excommunications of the Patriarch that forced them to organize themselves into a separate religious community, the Protestant *Millet*. It was this separation which resulted in the formation of the Armenian Evangelical Church on July 1, 1846.

II. The Formation of Armenian Evangelical Unions and Organizations

Following the establishment of the Armenian Evangelical Church, the next step members of the newly organized Church took was to secure *Millet* status, which was tantamount to civil recognition from the Ottoman government. In the Ottoman Empire, the Christian Churches, including the Armenian Church, were accorded official recognition, but not privileged status. On November 27, 1850, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Medjid granted formal recognition to the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Within a decade after its birth, the Armenian Evangelical Church had grown by leaps and bounds. To administer these churches effectively, the following four church Unions were organized: *Bithynia, Eastern, Cilician* and *Central Unions*. These Unions lasted until 1915, prior to the Armenian Genocide.

The Genocide changed the whole dynamics. More than 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives. Most of the Armenian Evangelical churches, schools and institutions were destroyed. Prior to the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian Evangelical community in Turkey numbered 51,000. It had 137 organized churches with 82 ordained ministers and 97 preachers and evangelists. In the aftermath of the Genocide, the Armenian Evangelicals counted 14,000 members, 31 churches, with 25 ordained ministers and 13 preachers.

The survivors of the Genocide scattered all over the Middle Eastern and European countries, the largest concentration being in Syria and Lebanon. Upon their settlement, gradually they embarked upon the difficult task of reconstruction. The following church Unions and organizations were organized:

1. Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE).

It was organized around the middle 1920s. New churches were founded, new schools were built, and new youth organizations were organized. The Armenian Missionary Association of America and non-Armenian missionary groups were instrumental in the reconstruction process.

2. Armenian Evangelical Union of France (AEUF).

AEUF was founded in 1924. Dr. Paul Beron, the founder of "Action Chretien en Orient," was instrumental in organizing the newly established churches and the AEUF.

3. Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA).

The Armenian immigrants in the United States organized two church Unions in the first decade of the 20th century: *Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States* and *Armenian Evangelical Union of California*. These two Unions merged in 1971 and formed the *Armenian Evangelical Union of North America*.

4. Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA)

was organized on May 8, 1995, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Republic of Armenia. This was an offshoot of the *Armenian Evangelical Union of Ararat*, which was organized at the turn of the 20th century but was dissolved in the late 1920s under the pressure of atheist Soviet rulers.

5. Armenian Evangelical Union of Eurasia (AEUE)

was organized on August 21, 1995. It is comprised of the Armenian Evangelical churches in the former Soviet Georgia, Eastern Europe and Central Turkey.

6. Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA).

The AMAA is the missionary arm or agency of the Armenian Evangelical churches worldwide. It was born on June 7, 1918, during the annual convention of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States with the purpose of "strengthening the spiritual life of our churches and to rebuild the churches of the fatherland," following the Armenian Genocide of 1915. It became, in many ways, the historical liaison, the unifying bond and the "Good Samaritan" of the Armenian Evangelical churches.

7. Stephen Philibosian Foundation (SPF).

The SPF is named after the late Stephen Philibosian, a long-time treasurer and board member of the AMAA and co-founder of Haigazian University. After establishing a sizable endowment fund for the AMAA, Stephen Philibosian organized his own foundation, Stephen Philibosian Foundation

in 1969, the income of which has been used for scholarship, reconstruction of churches, benevolence and for mission work.

III. The Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC)

Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) is a representative body of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), Armenian Evangelical Union of France (AEUF), Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA), Armenian Evangelical Union of Eurasia (AEUE), Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), and Stephen Philibosian Foundation (SPF).

The AEWC evolved from an all-Armenian Evangelical Conference, which was held from June 25-28, 1978, that aimed to "bring all Armenian Evangelicals together to reaffirm the essential unity of their faith in Jesus Christ, and in obedience to their calling as Armenian Evangelical churches and organizations, to enhance the furtherance of their common mission through study, consultation, and corporate action." The Conference appointed a "Master Plan Committee," whose recommendation led to the founding of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.

AEWC studies the common concerns conveyed by member organizations and churches and makes recommendations to them; provides channels of communication and means of cooperative action; elects its officers and appoints task forces to implement its decisions; periodically calls and organizes AEWC conferences; and on special occasions, makes public pronouncements on behalf of the Armenian Evangelical Unions and churches. It also plays the role of information bureau of the Armenian Evangelical churches and disseminates important information to all.

IV. The Doctrines and Theology of the Armenian Evangelical Church

The Armenian Evangelical Church is basically a religious movement representing both the traditions of its Mother Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Protestant Reformation. The founders of the Armenian Evangelical Church claimed that like their Mother Church, they accept the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, they believed in the major doctrines of the Christian Church, such as the doctrines of: *God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, man, sin, salvation, repentance, redemption, Church, and eschatology*.

The Armenian Evangelical Church was also greatly influenced by Protestant theology. From the Protestant theology, the Armenian Evangelical Church inherited the following theological principles and teachings: *Justification by faith alone, sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, priesthood of all believers, freedom of thought and speech (the right of private judgment), and the importance of Christian education for all age groups.*

V. The Benefits and Contributions of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the Armenian Nation

The 175th year history of the Armenian Evangelical Church is a rich one. Its legacy, benefits and contributions to the Armenian nation have been manifold in religious, educational, humanitarian and cultural realms. The following are just a few to mention:

1. Emphasis on Spiritual Transformation. The Armenian Evangelical Church has always emphasized the importance of spiritual regeneration, a radical commitment of one's whole life to Jesus Christ. Being born and baptized in a Christian church does not make a person Christian; a person has to be born again. As Jesus stated, "You must be born again" (John 3:7). This is a categorical imperative for all Armenian Evangelicals.

2. Christian Education. For a new-born Christian, Christian education is indispensable for spiritual nurture and growth. The Armenian Evangelical Church, through its Bible-centered church schools, youth and adult groups, mid-week Bible studies and seminars, has been preparing generations of Christian men and women who have made a difference in the society and nation.

3. Educational Institutions. Since its inception, the Armenian Evangelical Church has maintained a sound and enviable educational system. Through its schools ranging from kindergarten to university, it has been educating thousands of Armenians who, in turn, have been a blessing to the Armenian nation.

4. Cultural Contributions. The Armenian Evangelical Church has enriched the Armenian culture through its press and media, through the publication of its weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual newspapers, magazines, books and pamphlets, its academic seminars, art exhibits, concerts and musical performances.

5. Intellectual and Leadership Input. From its very beginning the Armenian Evangelical Church has endowed the Armenian people with distinguished intellectuals, educators and leaders in almost every realm of community life. Besides serving their own churches and organizations, many Armenian Evangelicals have been involved in Armenian political, social, educational, athletic organizations and have rendered valuable contributions.

6. Humanitarian and Philanthropic Services. The Armenian Evangelicals have rendered important services through their orphanages, hospitals, dispensaries, old age homes and homes for the disabled. Through its missionary and philanthropic organizations—*The Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, and Hope for Armenia*—the Armenian Evangelical Church has been rendering medical, educational, financial and spiritual services

to the Armenian people in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

7. Ecumenical Relations. The Armenian Evangelical Church has a long history of ecumenical involvement. The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East was one of the charter members of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It is actively involved not only in WCC but in a number of other ecumenical church organizations.

The theme of the 175th Anniversary celebration is: *"Holding fast the profession of our faith."* The selected biblical verse is: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised" (Hebrews 10:23).

The 175th Anniversary is an appropriate time for Armenian Evangelicals: To pay their tribute to the pioneers of the Armenian Evangelical Church; to salute those who followed in the footsteps of the "founding fathers" and kept the torch of faith burning; to renew their dedication to Jesus Christ and become a dynamic, witnessing community relating their Christian faith to all areas of life through their ministry, word, deed and lifestyle. □



*** Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian** is the Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.



Armenian Evangelical Church of Ourfa Council members - 1895.



Armenian Evangelical Church of Ourfa, constructed in 1880. Currently it has been converted to a Mosque.



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian's Congratulatory Remarks On the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church

The Holy Gospel is Our Father and the Holy Church is Our Mother. (Vartanank)



These words, which echoed from the New City of Vagharshapat (Holy Etchmiadzin), are the two Pillars that define the spiritual and moral character of each Armenian Christian.

Indeed, throughout centuries, these sacred truths have been the basis of our ability to overcome the trials and tribulations of each historical time period and have been the source of our existence today. Furthermore, the reliance on these everlasting truths comfort us and instill in us hope in these present times of great uncertainty.

We are delighted in knowing that this year marks the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church, a Church that has remained loyal to spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ since the day of its establishment. The Good News that was disseminated by God Incarnate illuminated the entire world and transformed the life of humanity, ensuring an eternal life with God.

The celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church grants us the opportunity to not only reflect on the past, but to equally focus on the present and future of the Church.

Founded in 1846 in Constantinople, the Armenian Evangelical Church progressed within the Armenian communities. We agree with the words of His Beatitude Archbishop Malachia Ormanian that "...indirect relations with the Western world was granted at a time when the expansion of these relations were limited."

The contributions of the Armenian Evangelical Church are vast, especially in the overall spiritual development of our nation's life. We wish to highlight the following.

The translation of the Holy Bible from classical Armenian to modern Armenian in the mid-19th century, when our language was in its transformational phase, was a magnificent feat, allowing the radiating light of the Gospel to enter the households of the faithful.

The Armenian Evangelical movement played a vital role in the intellectual renaissance of our people through prominent new publications and works. These included "The Dawn of Ararat," (Արշալոյս Արարատեան), "Tidag" (Դիտակ) and "Pyuragan" which continue to enrich the cultural and literary life of our nation. Among these jewels is the "Haigazian Armenological Review," the academic journal specializing in Armenian studies. Moreover, Haigazian University, a renowned institution of higher learning has been the source of academic enrichment for thousands of Armenian and non-Armenian students.

The Armenian Genocide claimed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians including the faithful of the Armenian Evangelical Church. As a result of the first Genocide of the 20th century, a number of educational institutions founded by prominent Armenian Evangelical Church leaders were destroyed, devastating our people who have tremendously valued the gift of education throughout history.

However, the resilience of our people was evident following the Genocide. The Armenian Evangelicals believed in the unrelenting dedication, undying spirit, and the reawakening of our people as new humanitarian and educational institutions were established in the United States of America, France and elsewhere. Undoubtedly, the milestones of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America have been great in number since its establishment 50 years ago. Its organizations, schools, educational, and cultural institutions have allowed the Armenian Evangelical Church to continue its mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ, our Lord.

The mission of the Armenian Evangelical Church is noteworthy in the Motherland, especially after Armenia gained its independence and where thousands of our compatriots receive spiritual nourishment and humanitarian assistance.

As a servant of Christ, our Lord in the Armenian Apostolic Church, we can attest that each structure, whether secular or religious, is undoubtedly faced with great challenges. The celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church is a testament of God's glory, for this noble institution has weathered many storms and has stood the test of time.

We rest assured that the Armenian Evangelical Church will remain loyal to its God-pleasing mission, and will continue to contribute to the prosperity of our people through educational and humanitarian endeavors.

Indeed, the love of Christ supersedes all things. It is our genuine wish and heartfelt prayer that the Armenian Evangelical Church continues to be led by the divine love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, thriving in its ministry and mission for the glory of God and the prosperity of the Armenian nation.

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Fidelity to the Mission of Renewal

By Hratch Tchilingirian, Ph.D.*

One of the most impressive characteristics of the Armenian Evangelical Church is the fact that, despite being small in numbers among Armenians worldwide, this 175-year-old church is one of the most active, visible and organized institutions in the Armenian world. Today, the mission, value and legitimacy of the Armenian Evangelical Church is indisputable, even as there had been periodic conflicts with the Armenian Apostolic Church in the past and after Armenia's independence.

Throughout their history and ministry, the Armenian Evangelicals have shown fidelity to the original mission of the church: the spiritual renewal of Armenians, the "Christian renaissance" of the Armenian nation. It is not a coincidence that the Armenian Protestant Church was established in the 19th century during the Armenian "intellectual renaissance" in the Ottoman Empire. Historians agree that a separate Armenian Protestant denomination was "imported" and "implanted" by European and United States missionaries but are divided over the causes and effects of events which led to the establishment of a separate church movement.

As Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, a minister and prolific author of many books, describes, "submission to Christ's commandments is utmost priority for the members of the Armenian Evangelical Church." The preaching of the Gospel and complete commitment to Christ have been visible and indispensable aspects of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Yet, upholding Armenian religious, cultural and patriotic traditions in community life and pursuing the rights of the Armenian people have been equally important.

The "national mission" of the Armenian Evangelical Church was described most profoundly by the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, a charismatic leader, at the first Armenia-Diaspora Conference in September 1999. During his official



Haigazian University, Beirut, Lebanon.

address as representative of the worldwide Armenian Evangelicals, Rev. Janbazian communicated the Evangelical community's wish and support for Karabakh's liberation and independence, for the defense and security of Armenia, for the creation of conditions for political stability and a democratic system of government in Armenia, for a strong Armenian economy, for reform and modernity in Armenia's educational system and for Armenian Genocide recognition by a greater number of nations and international bodies. At this unprecedented national gathering, rather than a narrow denominational understanding, Rev. Janbazian gave a wider, ecumenical definition to the mission of the Armenian nation. "In 301 AD, our forebears made a covenant with Jesus Christ. If we fulfill our commitment to that covenant, then God will abundantly bless our small but precious nation, and He will make our nation a source of blessings not only to its sons and daughters, but also to its neighboring peoples and to all humanity. We believe this is our nation's reason for being; this is our

people's mission in the world; and this is the God-ordained destiny of our *Haigazian* [Armenian] race."

Among the many contributions to Armenian life, two main areas of great impact stand out: *education* and *Christian charity*. While Christian education is part of the church's core mission, the Armenian Evangelical Church is well known for its network of high quality public schools throughout the Armenian world. They have been among the pioneers of education in post-Genocide Armenian communities, especially in the Middle East. The establishment and support of schools is part of the Armenian Evangelical "culture." The Evangelical schools are not only well known for the quality of curriculum, teaching staff and administration, but for the values and moral fortitude they instill in the students. The fact that most of their students come from non-Evangelical families is a testament to their success.

The crown-jewel of the Armenian Evangelical Church's commitment to education is the founding of Haigazian

College (later University) in Beirut in 1955. It remains the only Armenian institution of higher education in the Diaspora and is accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education of Lebanon. It is a member of the Association of International Colleges and Universities and offers over 20 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Historically significant, the University is named after Yale University graduate Dr. Armenag Haigazian (1879-1921), former Principal of the Jenanian Apostolic Institute in Konya, Turkey. A respected educator and community leader, during the Genocide, Haigazian died on the road to exile in Kharpert. His family in the United States donated seed money for the establishment of the school.

Perhaps the secret of the success of the Armenian Evangelical Church is its decentralized nature and the fact that it does not have a hierarchy. Unlike the Apostolic and the Catholic Churches, the Evangelicals do not have a supreme head or central headquarters. The more liberal, consensual and accommodating organizational model of the Armenian Evangelicals gives them an advantage to operate effectively in the globalized 21st century. Arguably, the Armenian Evangelical Church seems to be ahead of all other Armenian organizations: organizationally decentralized but unified in mission. This is in contrast to other religious,

political and civic organizations with very strong chains of command.

It is only in recent decades that the AMAA, the mission arm of the church, has become the de facto "center" of the church, not through "election" but by acclaim and in recognition of its work on behalf of the Evangelical community. The AMAA's mission focuses on charity, education, financial assistance and "the spiritual growth and development of the Armenian people." Since the 1988 earthquake and especially since Armenia's independence, the bulk of the AMAA's resources and contributions have gone to Armenia and Artsakh, where they have established permanent offices. Many times, the AMAA and its affiliates have punched above their weight and provided enormous amounts of assistance that belie their small size and capacities.

During the last nearly two centuries, the relations of the Evangelical Armenians with the "Mother Church," the Armenian Apostolic Church, have not always been smooth. But the late Catholicos Karekin I (Sarkissian) of All Armenians, at the 150th Anniversary celebrations in Yerevan, praised the ministry of the Evangelicals in the life of the Armenian nation and "prayed for the Armenian Evangelicals to become stronger and spread their spiritual values among [the] nation, together with the Armenian Apostolic Church."

Commitment to the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith, commitment to education and the well being of the Armenian nation, and commitment to doing charity work where needed are defining values of the Armenian Evangelical Church. "When every criticism has been made, and every allowance recorded for the imperfection of the Armenian Evangelical Church," wrote Rev. Tootikian, "the fact remains that she worked her way into many corners of the life of the Armenian Nation. Obvious faults and weaknesses must not hide the deeper significance of the Evangelical Movement, because measured by its effects, it proved itself a potent force among the Armenian people."

The clear mission and vision set 175 years ago will, no doubt, continue for many generations to come. The Armenian Evangelicals are small in size but significant in their impact. □



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Contributions of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the Armenian Nation in the Realm of Religion and Spirituality

By Rev. Kevork George Terian*

The greatest and most important contribution of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the spiritual life of their compatriots was the **translation of the entire Bible to modern Armenian**. Until the middle of the 19th century, the only Bible that was accessible to Armenians was the *Krapar* (classical Armenian) Bible that had been translated by Saint Mesrob Mashdotz and his linguist students in the early 5th century. Most biblical scholars called the Armenian *Krapar* Bible "The Queen of Translations" because of its linguistic refinements and its textual accuracy.

The problem was that languages are living organisms that constantly grow, and over a period of time, undergo drastic changes. For example, Chaucer's English is largely unintelligible to modern English readers. Similarly, the *Krapar* Bible was incomprehensible to most Armenians. Only a small group of highly trained elite scholars could understand it. Time takes a heavy toll on any language because the meaning of words and phrases change. Due to this natural phenomenon, old literary works must be revised; otherwise, they become archaic and outdated.

The reform minded Armenian Evangelicals, who were keen students of the Bible, were cognizant of the importance of God's Word largely due to Jesus' declaration, **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"** (Mark 13:31). The realization that the only thing in this world that will never perish or fade away is the Word of God, motivated the pioneers of the Armenian Evangelicals to spare no effort for translating the Bible from Classical Armenian to Modern Armenian (*Ashkharapar*) which admittedly lacks the grandeur of its predecessor; however, it served the purpose of providing biblical literacy for the general public.

The Armenian Evangelical Movement, from its inception, **encouraged people to study the Bible** regularly. **"The Society**



The Armenian Evangelical Church of Adana, Turkey.

of the Pious" was established in the mid-19th century for this special purpose. As they progressed in their study of the Holy Scriptures, they discovered that some religious traditions and practices, that had gained widespread acceptance among the Armenians, either had no biblical base, or were in direct conflict with the Gospel. Consequently, **they did away with everything that eclipsed Jesus or veiled the clarity of the Gospel**. Their main concern was and has been to retain and preserve the purity of the original Gospel in its unaltered and undiluted form.

Evangelical Armenians **promoted a distinctive Christian lifestyle** by living what they preached and by making sure that their personal conduct conformed to the teachings of Jesus. In a nutshell, they **established a link between spirituality and morality**. Pretty soon, not only their Christian neighbors, but also the Turkish and Kurdish Moslems observed the marked difference that existed between the Evangelicals and the general population. The Evangelicals' moral character was so impeccable, and their reputation for honesty, integrity and uprightness was so noticeable, that the Ot-

toman Government exempted them from taking the customary oath in courtroom settings. It was generally acknowledged that the Evangelicals' testimony would be completely free from falsehood. **True theology is always practical.**

Evangelical Armenians **transformed Christian doctrines from an abstract theory into practical theology** by teaching that Christian communities must demonstrate God's love in a tangible way by caring for people who were in need regardless of their religious affiliation or ethnic origin. Based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Christians ought to regard all human beings as their brothers and sisters and alleviate their suffering by emulating Jesus' example of unselfish giving that was vividly revealed on Calvary's Cross. **Love does not neutralize faith; on the contrary, it validates it.**

Evangelical Armenians **taught that the principle of Christian Stewardship** should be the vital means for financing the operations of their churches and schools. They insisted that financial contributions to the church should not be dependent on a person's mood or whim but are to be con-

sidered as a Christian obligation prescribed by Jesus to gauge the level of the donor's spiritual maturity, and to ensure the recipient's general welfare. **According to James 2:20, faith without deeds is worthless**, therefore, not only good deeds cannot be separated from faith, but are the evidence of genuine faith, and the demonstration of unselfish love. This core belief led Evangelical Armenians to establish and fund humanitarian institutions, such as orphanages, medical clinics, soup kitchens and old peoples' homes.

In the same vein, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew word "dabar" which is used 1,441 times in the Old Testament, means "a spoken word" and "an act" simultaneously. In Psalm 33:9 we read, "God spoke, and the universe came into existence; He commanded, and the earth stood firm." The creation of our vast universe was dependent on God's spoken word and His expressed command. **Concrete action followed God's spoken Word.**

Armenian Evangelicals **transformed church members from mere spectators to active participants** in worship services. The lay people who sit in church pews participate in religious services through responsive readings, congregational prayers and responses to calls made from the pulpit. This practice **replaces fixed rigidity by spontaneous flexibility, and innovative adaptability**. The congregational polity that Evangelical Armenians embraced gives every church member a voice in how the church is run, led and governed. This system also has the added advantage of **making church leaders directly accountable to their constituent members** for all their activities. Since everything in this world is in a state of flux, the congregational system of church government makes it easy to respond to the ever-changing environment in a reasonable way without sacrificing the core doctrines of the Gospel.

Evangelical Armenians **elevated the status of women** by urging them to pursue and attain higher education. Besides being housewives, Armenian women were propelled to positions of leadership by becoming teachers, school principals, nurses, hospital administrators, writers and civic leaders.

Armenian Evangelicals have **advocated a renewed understanding of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus**. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Apostle Paul says that sinners are saved by grace through faith, not by works, so that no

one can boast. This foundational doctrine of the New Testament demolishes the erroneous notion that people can enter into a right relationship with God by obeying the Law. The Apostle Paul makes it crystal clear that "No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the Law" because the function of the Law is only to point out sin (Romans 3:20). Good deeds are not meritorious simply because they are the result of faith, not its source.

Although the Armenian Evangelical Church is primarily a religious institution, she has **never separated Christian piety from patriotism**. For this reason, Armenian Evangelical ministers and laymen performed an active role in the self-defense of the Armenian communities at Musa Dag, Aintab, Marash, Hadjin, Zeitoun, Dordyol and Shabin Karahisar. They fought courageously and admirably with their Apostolic and Catholic brethren to resist the Turkish plundering of Armenian towns and villages, to stop the cruel mass killings and deportations of the indigenous Armenians, and to protect the honor of their women.

Drawing their inspiration from the Battle of Avarayr, Armenian Evangelicals have always believed that self-defense is permitted and justified by the teachings of the New Testament. When Jesus revealed to His disciples the severe hostilities that they will confront in the future, He advised them to sell their outer garments in order to buy swords (Luke 22:36-38). Since the Bible considers human life to be sacred, it must be preserved by all means. **The refusal to resist evil becomes the worst imaginable evil**. While Christians are not allowed to initiate violent acts, they are instructed to oppose and resist them.

In closing, I want to cite the **beneficial effects** that Armenian Evangelicals have had on the Armenian Apostolic Church:

- Prelates and diocesan leaders started demanding that priests attain higher education prior to their ordination. Previously, a man could be ordained a priest if he had a melodious voice and had the ability to sing in an enchanting way.
- Accelerated the distribution and the reading of the "Ashkharapar" Bible.
- Solidified the support for social justice.
- Organized parochial schools that were patterned after the Evangelical Sunday Schools.
- Adopted the personal "Pledge System" to fund their churches and other institutions.

- Established mid-week Bible Study classes that have become very popular.
- Replaced rivalry and animosity by mutual love, respect and cooperation.

In the Diaspora and in our ancestral Homeland, there are Armenians who attach a great importance to the ancient liturgy and solemn rituals of the Armenian Apostolic and the Armenian Catholic churches. Such people will seldom, if ever, gravitate to the Armenian Evangelical Church. On the other hand, there are Armenians who have an insatiable desire to delve deep into the study of the Bible, and these are the people who will feel comfortable in the fellowship of the Armenian Evangelical congregations. I have noticed that where an Armenian Evangelical Church does not exist, the people in this latter category, usually join non-Armenian churches where, in due time, they become assimilated and gradually lose their Armenian heritage. Therefore, the very existence of Armenian Evangelical churches fills a void by providing an environment that is conducive to deep and meaningful Bible study for those Armenians who have no interest in a formally structured worship style, and desire, more than anything else, to have a personal encounter with the living Christ in order to experience moral regeneration through the life-transforming power of His amazing grace.

I want to end my brief discourse by stating unapologetically that every Armenian Church, regardless of her name and type, plays a pivotal role in the daily life of Armenians and gives them the freedom to choose a spiritual home where their spiritual needs can be met in an adequate manner. The Armenian Evangelicals, throughout their history, have consistently upheld the inalienable right of all individuals to choose, in full freedom, their religious beliefs and worship God according to the dictate of their conscience, without any external coercion. Armenian Evangelicalism and freedom have been and will always remain inseparable twins. □



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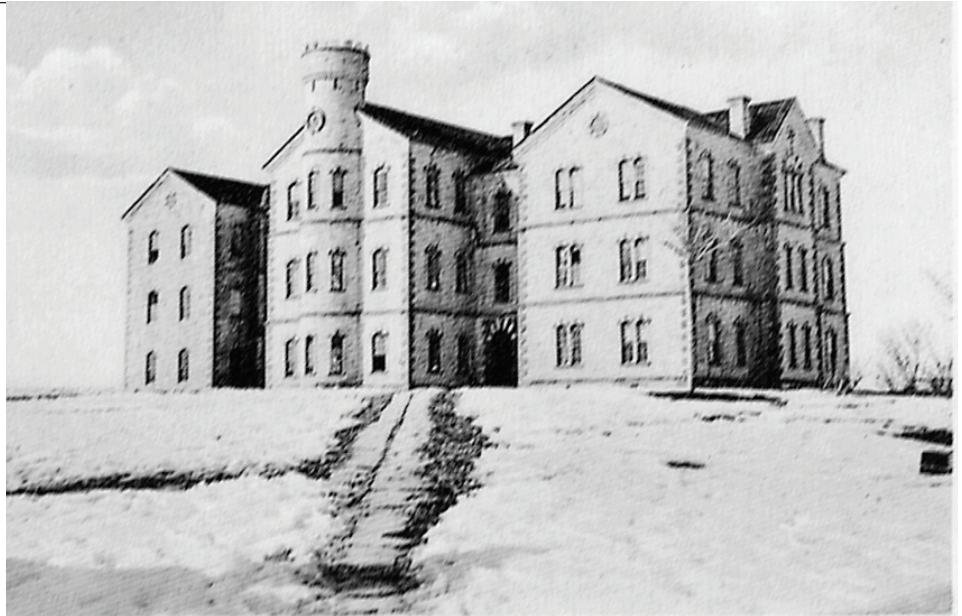
Armenian Evangelical Education: Legacy of Enlightenment

By Hasmig Baran, Ed.D.*

On this milestone of the 175th Anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Evangelical Church, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate its remarkable achievements in the past and the present. The Armenian Evangelical Movement contributed to the spiritual revival and the intellectual renaissance of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire beginning in the 19th century and continuing its mission across the globe to the present. This brief essay will reflect upon Armenian Evangelical education as one of the significant contributions of the movement to the Armenian people. As such, it will survey the history of the Armenian Evangelical educational system, its nature and characteristics, the effect of the massacres and the Genocide, and its expansion to the present.

The earnest desire for education among Armenians during the awakening period in Constantinople made the presence of the American Protestant missionaries welcome. It was this yearning for knowledge that made the Armenians' embrace of American progressive ideas about human rights, spiritual revival and gender equality easier. It was against this backdrop that the Armenian Evangelical Movement began and took momentum. Consequently, schools, colleges and seminaries were established.

The foundation of the educational scope of the Armenian Evangelical Movement could be attributed to two main factors. First, there was the collaboration of the Armenian Evangelicals with the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire in the establishment of schools and seminaries for the training of Armenian pastors and educators. Second, every Armenian Evangelical church had its own primary and/or secondary school in Constantinople and the provinces. Some of the main colleges were the Kharpert Seminary, later known as Euphrates College; Robert College in Istanbul; Central Turkey College in Aintab, which had a girls' branch;



Aintab College in Turkey, established in 1876 by Evangelicals. The students were mainly Armenians. As a result of the massacres of the Armenians during the 1915 Armenian Genocide, the College was transferred to Aleppo, Syria, where it became known as Aleppo College.

Anatolia College in Marzovan; Marash Theological Seminary; and St. Paul Institute in Tarsus. The purpose of these institutions was to advance literacy, illuminate the minds, uplift the spirit of the Armenian people and prepare future leaders.

The decade between 1870 and 1880 marked the peak of the quality of higher education. For example, a college applicant had to be proficient in Armenian and Armeno-Turkish, spelling and writing, Christian tenets, Geography, Mathematics, Armenian Classical and Vernacular grammar, Ottoman Turkish, the Old Testament, and Human Development. A special importance was given to music education, theory, voice and piano lessons.

The implementation of modern pedagogical methods and the openness of the governing bodies to science made those schools in a sense models for their time. The elementary and secondary schools followed the "Bell Lancaster Method" that is now commonly known as tutoring. The students themselves became teachers for

others. Additionally, this method proved to be more economical by decreasing the number of teacher assistants employed. The early childhood and kindergarten education followed the "Froebellian Method." This method was based on self-expression through play and self-directed exploration now commonly known as the "Reggio Emilia" and "Montessori" approaches.

The Western orientation of the Armenian Evangelical schools made them more liberal and enlightened. The education of girls was one aspect of the progressive nature of the Armenian Evangelical Movement. Higher education became a viable option even for females, who had been excluded from this opportunity prior to the advent of the Protestant institutions. Despite the persistence of traditional values in the Armenian communities, these schools for girls played an important role in enhancing the influence of women in society. The graduates of these schools became educators for the younger generations of Armenians. In fact, toward the end of the 19th century,

the majority of teachers in Armenian elementary schools were female graduates and undergraduates of American missionary colleges, seminaries and teacher-training institutions. In addition, as a result of higher education, the status of women was elevated in the male-dominated society.

The Armenian Evangelical institutions have been inclusive from their onset. They have opened their doors to all Armenians without any discrimination against confessional adherences. In fact, 92% of the student population of the Armenian Evangelical schools was from the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic communities. A similar percentage would apply to today's schools as well. Many of the graduates from these Armenian Evangelical schools assumed leadership roles in the Armenian community at large.

Christian education was considered essential for the Mission of the Armenian Evangelical Church. In addition to children's education, particular importance was given to adult education to increase their literacy rate, and for spiritual development among all. Thus, they pioneered in the founding of Sunday Schools and youth associations. The Christian Endeavor was first established in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Aintab in 1886. Becoming a church member required the successful completion of confirmation classes that were taught in Sunday Schools.

The youth associations served as vehicles for the intellectual, spiritual and physical development of boys and girls, and trained them to become future leaders. For example, in Marash, each church had its own youth group called "ukhouvet"(brotherhood). These groups engaged in prayer meetings and Bible study. Their monthly gatherings included various performances, singing and lectures. They even had a handwritten monthly newsletter.

The Armenian Evangelicals were subjected to the same fate as all Armenians were during the 1894-1896 and 1909 massacres, as well as the Armenian Genocide. These horrors disrupted the culture and social fabric of the once burgeoning Armenian Evangelical community in the Ottoman Empire. Armenian Protestant leaders, and many of the Ottoman Armenian community leaders, who had received their education at the Armenian Evangelical institutions, perished during those massacres. Some were imprisoned; those who were released had to leave the country. The schools remained closed for a long time and were vandalized in

their entirety. Hence, Armenian Evangelical education suffered a great loss.

In 1923, after the Armenians were driven from Cilicia, the Armenian Evangelical churches were reestablished in Syria and Lebanon, where a significant number of the Armenian Evangelicals in the Middle East lived. Pursuant to the mission of their forefathers, they reorganized themselves and continued the tradition of providing sound education by opening schools. Their curricula included religious, cultural and scientific subjects in addition to the Armenian, Arabic, English and French languages. Similarly, they reorganized the youth ministry through the Armenian Evangelical Christian Endeavor Union (*Krisdoneagan Chanits Engeragsutyun*) that is affiliated with the World Christian Endeavor Union and the Christian Endeavor International.

Today, in the Near East, the Sunday Schools are organized into local unions and carry on their activities through their respective executive committees. They hold membership in the Bible Lands Union for Christian Education. They similarly follow a unified grade level curriculum published by the Near East Sunday School Curriculum Board.

In the United States, at the beginning, the Armenian Protestant Youth Fellowship operated in the Mid-Western, Middle-Atlantic, and New England geographical areas. The Christian Endeavor Union of California became the unifying force of the Armenian Evangelical youth in California. In 1978, these two youth organizations merged and formed the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship (AEYF).

The Armenian Missionary Association of America extends its moral and material support to the Armenian Evangelical Churches and the schools worldwide. They cover the whole spectrum of educational levels ranging from pre-school to college. Though the quantity of those establishments is much less than the ones in the Ottoman Empire, their mission, effectiveness and high quality persist. Many leaders of the Armenian communities are the product of the Armenian Evangelical educational system. Here, I would like to highlight Haigazian University, established in 1955 as a College by the joint efforts of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Near East. It distinguishes itself among numerous universities in Lebanon by its high educational standards.

The Near East School of Theology in Beirut prepares parish ministers, Christian educators and religious workers. The Aleppo College, based in Aleppo since 1923, traces its roots to Central Turkey College of Aintab. As such, it has prepared thousands of young Armenian and non-Armenian men and women alike for service to society. An example would be Nazem al-Kudsi, a former President of Syria (1961-1963).

Presently, the Armenian Evangelical schools include, Armenian Evangelical Central High School (Ashrafieh, Beirut), Armenian Evangelical College (Beirut); the Armenian Evangelical Secondary Boarding School (Anjar, Lebanon); Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Bourj Hammoud (Nor Marash); Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel School (Aleppo); Armenian Evangelical Bethel Secondary School (Aleppo); Armenian Evangelical Martyr's School of Kessab (Syria); Hrant Dink School (Istanbul), C. & E. Merdinian School (Sherman Oaks, CA); Holy Trinity Armenian Pre-School (North Hollywood, CA); Sipan Armenian School {weekly} (Paramus, NJ); Armenian Evangelical Gohar Mesropian School (Tehran); Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School (Yerevan); "Shogh"Day centers (Gyumri, Vanadzor, Yerevan, Askeran and Shushi{now occupied}); Armenian Evangelical Hagop & Lydia Baghdikian Kindergarten (Stepanakert); Armenian Evangelical Krikor Garabed Bilezikian Kindergarten (Shushi); Yeprem & Zabel Basmajian Armenian Evangelical Kindergarten (Askeran); Armenian Evangelical Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian Kindergarten (Martakert).

To conclude, the Armenian Evangelical Church had, and still has, a substantial input in the field of education. The Armenian Evangelical community takes pride in its educational institutions around the world. With the same fervor and commitment as their forefathers had, the Armenian Evangelical communities continue their mission in providing intellectual, nationalistic and spiritual quality education for all. □



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Current Challenges of the Armenian Evangelical School

By Armen Urneshlian, Ph.D.*

It is a well-known fact that education played a vital role in the Armenian Evangelical movement before and after the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Constantinople in 1846. Churches and schools were established jointly because *"intellectual enlightenment is a precondition for its [Evangelical movement] existence and successful development."*¹

The following two testimonies are quite reflective in this respect. *"In 1869 there were 170 missionary schools [in the Ottoman Empire] with about 5,000 students, who were mainly Armenian. We can consider them Armenian schools."*² Rev. Yeghia Kassouny writes that *"[According to reports from the early 1900s] in the Ottoman Empire American missionaries had 44 high schools, 8 colleges, 1 teacher training school, and 5 theological seminaries, in addition to 370 preschools run mainly by Armenian Evangelicals. These schools had 21,000 students of both sexes."*³ The significant increase in the number of schools and students within 30-35 years is quite obvious.

Protestant educational institutions founded by missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, and later, the schools founded by the Armenian Evangelical Church have been important centers of evangelism and enlightenment, not only for the children of the Evangelical Community, but for all Armenians. This statement has been valid for the post-Genocide period until today.

The Mission of the Armenian Evangelical School

Armenian Evangelical writers, leaders and researchers have written a lot about the mission of the Armenian Evangelical School. It is noticeable that it has remained almost unchanged through time and in different conditions. The mission can be summarized as an endeavor *"To develop a learned, critical thinker, Christian and Armenian individual."*⁴ The four elements of this objective are complementary, integral and inseparable. The Armenian Evangelical

School follows this principle to this day. A quick look at the mission statements of three Armenian Evangelical Schools operating in three different countries and environments (the Y. & M. Pilibossian Armenian Evangelical College in Beirut (est. 1923), the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan (est. 1998) and the C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, California (est. 1982) show that they follow the same principles, although the formulation might be different.

Of course, having a mission and following it undeviatingly is fundamental, but due to the change of time and conditions, it is necessary to develop new approaches to implement the provisions of the mission statement, a new mechanism, so that the principle does not become an elusive slogan, but a clear vision and call for action.

What are the challenges that the Armenian Evangelical Schools are facing on the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church and amid numerous changes that we are witnessing and living?

New Approach to Recurrent Challenges

I will not concentrate on the serious financial crisis that the Armenian schools face everywhere. It may vary from California to Beirut and Yerevan, but the problem is there. Instead, I will try to focus on the main provisions of the mission and will try to consider what are the challenges that these principles are facing today.

1. The learned and critical thinker

*"Not only a well-educated and well-nourished soul is necessary for the Christian character, but also a mind accustomed to free and fearless thinking."*⁴ These ideas, written by Rev. Dikran Kherlopian 70 years ago, are still very relevant today.

Only a learned person can think freely and fearlessly. Knowledge is acquired by learning, and especially by **the desire to learn**. I believe that the most important

challenge of a modern school is to prepare a person who craves to learn, one whose learning does not begin or end with school. Former methods of accumulating knowledge became obsolete with Google. In the past, learning served to gather knowledge. Now knowledge itself must be used to develop a lifelong learning process. And we learn only by enquiring. And enquiry derives from thinking. And the thinking person is an added value to the society, the nation, the church. One of the main goals of the Evangelical movement was to educate a thinking Christian whose faith is not blind but based upon persuasion.

If necessary, our entire curriculum and pedagogical methodology should be reviewed, to help our students acquire critical thinking skills. This modern approach is still shrouded in uncertainty, and despite attempts, it has not been possible to fully implement in the curriculum.

2. The Christian individual

The peculiarity of the Evangelical school is based on its distinctive Christian education, which is implemented in three ways. 1) Teaching and learning (with Bible lessons, etc.), 2) Chapel services and 3) spiritual activities (Bible Club, Sunday school, youth activities, etc.). Our schools do provide all these, which in turn prepare an infrastructure of a life in faith. However, there are many inquiries on this important subject. 1) How should the success of this provision of the mission be measured? 2) What is the criteria for living a life based on Christian faith? 3) Outside the walls of the school what is the role of this Christian education in the students' daily life?

According to Dr. Yervant Kassouny *"the Christian faith will serve as a foundation for the student to be acquainted with God, to adopt moral standards inspired by faith, to take a stand for life, for education and science, for ethnicity and culture, and for physical privileges."*⁵

It is very difficult to find answers to the above questions and expectations, but it is

not impossible. Non-Evangelical schools also prepare learned and critical thinkers and self-aware Armenians and Christians. However, an Armenian Christian brought up by Evangelical principles is formed only in our institutions, not even in non-Armenian Evangelical or Protestant schools. Thus, keeping the principle intact, we should examine the effectiveness of the ongoing efforts to achieve the goal and, accordingly develop a renewed strategy.

3. The Armenian individual

The perception of Armenianness is gradually changing in the Diaspora. The definition and the concept of Armenian identity is much different compared to 175, 100, 50, even 20 years ago. These changes have automatically affected our educational system as well. This state, as natural as it is, is also dangerous, because the change is **forced on us**. It is out of our control. Therefore, it is necessary to draw a red line, not allowed to be crossed, and then develop methods so that we can face the changes imposed on us by external circumstances through planned strategies, and not circumstantial solutions.

What are the challenges we are facing today in our schools as Armenians? Is it the Armenian language, not spoken well or not at all? Is it the strengthening of our national consciousness? Is it creating strong bonds with Armenia? Is it difficulty to bequeath our national heritage? Is it obsolescence of the curriculum? Or something else? Whatever the challenges are, we can meet and overcome them with research and a realistic approach to draw a road map for the coming decades.

Major Changes Without Radical Concessions

This should be our motto.

What are our means to make the necessary changes and transform the Armenian Evangelical School to a leading educational institution?

A. In 1936, Armenian Evangelical Teachers' Unions were established in Lebanon and in 1946 in Syria. This was maybe the most progressive development in our school system (and not only ours), which was most probably ceased due to external circumstances. Modern schooling believes in strengthening all the elements involved in the educational process. It is necessary to give a boost to that idea.

B. For more than a year, the world has become smaller and smaller, through such things as online classes, meetings, worships,

concerts and workshops. It is time to compile a comprehensive network of Armenian Evangelical Schools, which will first identify our common challenges, organize online discussions, and then set joint and specialized platforms to address all these challenges.

C. A small part of our schools' faculty and staff are Armenian Evangelicals. There are many non-Evangelical, non-Armenian, non-Christian teachers. No matter how inevitable the presence of non-Armenians, and in some cases non-Christians on the faculty is, it is necessary to develop a special policy for them to work and behave in accordance with the principles of Armenian-Evangelical morality and way of life.

D. Armenian Evangelical Schools must add value to the community. It can be through Christian upbringing (not only education). It can also be implemented through integrating critical thinking skills into the curriculum, starting with some classes taught in Armenian. By doing so, we will help Armenians who graduate from our schools be different from the graduates of other politically affiliated schools.

E. It is necessary to have subjective and comprehensive data about our schools, past and present, to find out how well we meet the challenges of fulfilling our educational mission. If needed, we should prepare a road map to increase the capabilities of schools, rather than making amendments to the mission. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the standards of core values high and be flexible in the means of implementation.

F. Rev. Yeghia Kassouny writes: "*Physica Boghos badveli and Deacon Mesrop Taghian were eager to acquire modern science from them, that's why they developed a close relationship with American missionaries.*"¹⁶ The key word here is **modern science**. "*Without a scientific spirit and without a sufficient supply of sound scientific ideas, it is impossible to build a harmonious religious-ecclesiastical*

life on solid foundations."¹⁷ If in the 19th century "modern science" was the teaching of natural sciences and biology or writing articles about astronomy and geology, in the 21st century it is the vast field of Information Technology. By including high standard IT programs in our curriculum, we can be pioneers within Armenian Schools in our neighborhoods.

Like all the Armenian Schools in the Diaspora, our Evangelical schools also need to summarize the achievements we have made thus far and outline our expectations for the coming decades to attain them. □

1. Rev. Yeghia S. Kassouny, *Light-Path (Lousashavigh) (in Armenian) - History of the Armenian Evangelical Movement 1846-1946, (in Armenian), Beirut, 1947, page 341.*
2. V. S. Yerganian, "The Armenian School 1800-1870", (in Armenian), *Herald of Social Sciences*, Yerevan, 1971, No. 4, page 39.
3. Kassouny, *Light-Path (Lousashavigh)* page 257-8.
4. *Golden Book (Vosgemadyan) of the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East, (in Armenian) vol. 1, compiled by Rev. Dikran J. Kherlopian, Beirut, 1950, page 166.*
5. Yervant H. Kassouny, *Thoughts about the Armenian Evangelical Church, (in Armenian), Beirut 2016, page 317-8.*
6. Kassouny, *Light-Path (Lousashavigh)*, page 376.
7. Kherlopian, *Golden Book (Vosgemadyan)* page 164.



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Virtual daily Morning Worship Service at Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School of Sherman Oaks, CA, during Distance Learning time due to COVID-19.



"Sing Unto the Lord a New Song"

Reflections on the Evolution of Music in the Armenian Evangelical Church

By Rev. Nerses and Sevan Balabanian*

"I love the sound of the pipe organ."

"I worship at that church because their praise band is awesome."

"Why do they sing such outdated and irrelevant songs?"

"I miss singing the traditional hymns."

"These are foreign songs. Where are the Sharagans (liturgical songs from the Armenian Apostolic Mass)?"

Have you heard such comments? Do any of these statements represent your own opinion about music in your church? Having been involved in the music of the Armenian Evangelical Church in different countries for several decades, we have experienced and participated in a variety of genres in church music.

Here are some reflections regarding how music evolved within the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Historical Background

Since its founding 175 years ago on July 1, 1846, the Armenian Evangelical Church has considered congregational singing to be an essential part of the worship service. Worshippers raise their voices together as a community of believers. Together they sing praises to God, together they recount what God has done, together they proclaim their faith, together they acknowledge their needs, and together they renew their commitment.

Several years before they founded the Armenian Evangelical Church, members of the *Parebashdoutian Miyapanoutune* (The Society of the Pious) were known to sing translated hymns at their gatherings.¹

It is important to note that among its first members were several priests who sang *Sharagans* and wrote new songs in the same style. For example, Rev. Apisoghom

Utujian, the first ordained Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church, wrote a new song called "*Bandzastsi Aysor*" in the style of a *Sharagan*. It is too bad that even though the lyrics remain, the tune has not been preserved.²

The necessity of making songs more understandable to the common parishioner gave rise to a movement of translation. Along with the translation of the *Krapar* (Classical Armenian) Bible to *Ashkharapar* (Vernacular Armenian), the missionaries translated a vast number of Western hymns to Armenian.** The missionaries were not totally against the *Sharagans*. In fact, they expressed their admiration of their beauty which they said was based on the principles of nature and the rules that govern it. However, the lyrics of the *Sharagans* were in *Krapar* and therefore not easy for the

common people to understand. Moreover, in the 19th century, the tunes of *Sharagans* were sometimes distorted and sung differently in each church due to the absence of modern musical notation.³

The first two Armenian Evangelical hymnals were published in 1856 and 1860.*** In 1901, a spiritual revival swept through Aintab, Marash, Kilis, Kharpert and numerous other towns and villages in Asia Minor. The awakening was so intense that it was described as "a fire that can't be extinguished even with the waters of the Arctic Ocean."⁴ The believers would sing and recite Bible verses for hours. In the second half of the 19th century, many more hymnals were published, some of them up to 50,000 copies and 10 editions.⁵

Armenian Evangelicals, in cooperation with the missionaries, made a substantial contribution to the development of musical knowledge among the 19th century Armenians in Turkey.⁶ In addition to the publication of the hymnals, reading music was taught in the boarding schools and the seminaries. Talented students received training to play hymns. Many students received choral training to sing in three or four voices. The missionaries made sure that each church, whether big or small, had a bell and an organ (probably harmonium).⁷

Music in the Armenian Evangelical Church

For the last 175 years, hymns have remained the basic genre sung in the Armenian Evangelical churches around the world. The piano, the organ and the choir have become almost the standard in every worship service. Also, several *Sharagans*, which are consistent with the theology of the Armenian Evangelical Church, have been incorporated in the hymnals and have been much appreciated by the congregations. It is noteworthy that several Armenian Evangelical musicians such as Rev. Sisag Emurian and Rev. Armenag Missirian (Armis) wrote original four-part hymns with an Armenian flavor.

A radical shift occurred in the style of church music worldwide in the second half of the 20th century and slightly later in the Armenian Evangelical Church. It is hard to define exactly when contemporary Christian music was born, but it is pretty safe to say that the late 1960s and early 1970s gave rise to a movement of modern ways of singing in church. The guitar took over the prominent place of the organ or the piano.

Almost at the same time in the early 1970s, a similar thing happened among many Armenian Evangelical youth groups around the world. Along with spiritual revivals, these new songs came to bring a lot of excitement to the Armenian Evangelical youth all over the Diaspora. The Christian Endeavor or other church youth groups embraced the songs and used them extensively in their summer camps and in church. In the United States, Canada and France, these new songs were sung in the local languages, but in Syria, Lebanon, and Iran they were being translated into Armenian.

During those years, a revival happened within the Armenian speaking communities to embrace new Armenian Christian contemporary songs. A significant and unique contribution was made by Rev. Hagop Djambazian of Beirut. The melodies of the songs he composed were close to the hearts of the Armenian people. As he performed them in several countries along with his brother Rev. Berdj Djambazian and broadcasted them on the radio, this new genre was much appreciated. Moreover, behind closed doors in Soviet Armenia, talented young believers started composing new praise songs. Similarly, believers in Iran, Syria, the United States and elsewhere contributed with their own compositions.

As all of these new songs, whether Armenian or foreign, came into the church, youth bands were formed. The guitars, drums, keyboards, amplifiers and speakers entered the sanctuary.

Even though this change brought a new excitement in the church, for some people this shift was not acceptable, and triggered a lot of resistance.

Sing a New Song

The psalmist writes, "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth." (Psalm 96:1)

What is "a new song?" How and when can we incorporate them in our worship?

It would be wrong to suggest that we should never try anything new in worship. Music styles change, and so do instruments. If we look at church history, we come across many periods when those changes created resistance. Can you imagine that polyphonic singing (singing in harmony) was considered offensive and devilish? Counter melodies and harmonies caused an outrage, pipe organs were removed and destroyed, and hymns that were not direct quotations from the Bible were banned.

Traditional vs Contemporary

We often come across worship services labeled as "Traditional," "Contemporary" or even "Blended." For a moment, let us put aside all bias and objectively evaluate the styles of church music.⁸ What are the characteristics of Traditional Hymns, Contemporary Christian Music and Armenian Contemporary Praise songs?

- A. **Hymns:** The melody of a hymn drives the music. The tune has contours, high points and pauses between phrases when the congregation breathes together. Hymns mostly cover a range of one octave making congregational singing possible. They are written in four-part harmony expressed in consecutive vertical chord progressions. They were mainly composed in the 20th century or earlier. Most hymn lyrics are doctrinally rich poems, uncompromising and Christ-centered. However, some of them sound irrelevant to the ears of the contemporary audience and do not appeal to those who were not raised in church.
- B. **Contemporary Christian songs:** The beat, the rhythm and the chord progression drive the music and carry it forward. The rhythm often creates an urge to move your body or tap along. The melody may span a very small range (a few notes) or jump an octave thus covering a huge range. Contemporary song lyrics are often personal and experience-based, written in simple, everyday language. They appeal to the young people and those who are not familiar with church jargon. These songs are led by a band and soloists. Although the intention is to lead congregational singing, a tendency of becoming a performance is present.
- C. **Armenian Contemporary Praise songs** (original, untranslated): The modern rhythm and the Armenian melodies drive the music. Minor key tunes sound familiar to the Armenian people's ears and are learned instantly. Lyrics are in either Western or Eastern Armenian, depending on where they were composed, and they cover a variety of themes. Even though this style of music was welcomed within the Armenian Evangelical youth and church services, new compositions did not thrive as expected. Unfortunately, in the recent years we have witnessed the booming of translated praise songs from English to Armenian.

Reflections and Suggestions

"Worship God. If necessary, use music."⁹ We need to be careful not to make music a primary issue in our worship service. Instead of uniting the congregation, sometimes music becomes an obstacle and causes divisions within the body of the church.

What is the "best" or "most appropriate" type of music in the Armenian Evangelical Church today? There is no easy answer to that question. Jesus said, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24 NIV11). When we worship, we must humble ourselves before God, surrender our lives to His control, and adore Him for who He is. Worship is a lifestyle, not just a Sunday activity. It is an attitude of the heart. When people come together to worship, what really matters is to do it **in Spirit and in truth**. Other things are secondary.

Here are some final remarks and suggestions that might be useful to edify the body of Christ as we come together to worship.

To the pastors and church musicians:

- Select a variety of genres including traditional, contemporary, Armenian, Sharagans and keep a healthy balance.
- Present hymns and contemporary songs with similar excitement. Choosing the appropriate tempo will help the

congregation to sing enthusiastically and not drag.

- Choose songs with lyrics that are consistent with the theology of the Armenian Evangelical Church.
- Make sure the songs involve congregational participation and do not become a performance.
- Find talented people who can contribute to composing new Armenian Christian songs of any genre.
- Carefully notate any new song so that it will remain unaltered from one generation to the next.
- Even if you use projected lyrics for congregational singing, also provide the written score for singing correctly, and if possible, harmonizing.

To the congregation:

- Treasure the traditional hymns and value their depth.
- Familiar songs are always desirable. Be open to learn new ones, and they soon will become familiar and perhaps even beloved.
- Be open to other styles of music even if they are not your most favorite.
- Embrace the youth, show acceptance. To God be the glory. *Soli Deo gloria.* □

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4. Rev. Yeghia Kassouny, *Loosashavigh-Badmootune Hye Avedaranagan Sharzhman (The Path of Light: History of the Armenian Evangelical Movement)*, Beirut, American Press, 1947, p. 245
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7. Rev. Yeghia Kassouny, p. 362
8. David Wesley, *Traditional Hymns vs Contemporary Worship* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqFVFYOMgFM>
9. Daniel I. Block, *Worship God at All Times, If Necessary, Use Music.* Christianity Today, May 2019

** The translation of hymns lasted over several decades. Even though there were many translators, the names of missionaries Rev. Dr. Elias Riggs and Rev. Charles Tracy in addition to Rev. Eflaton Elmajian stand out as having translated the largest number of hymns.

*** As early as the 19th century, there were songbooks for the youth as well. *Yerker yev Yeghanagner Dghayots Hamar (Songs and Tunes for the Children)* Constantinople, 1860, *Yerkaran- Gronagan yev Azkayin (Songbook- Religious and Patriotic)*, Cairo, 1914, *Badanyats Yerker (Songs for the Youth)* Beirut, 1939, *Hokevor Yerker Nor Serounti Hamar (Spiritual Songs for the New Generation)* Beirut, 1973, *Nor Yerk Yerketsek Deroch (Sing a New Song Unto the Lord)*, Beirut, 1999.



Missionaries who translated the Bible into vernacular Armenian. L to R: Rev. Dr. Elias Riggs (translator of hymns as well), Rev. Dr. William Goodell and Dr. William Schaffler.



* **Rev. Nerses Balabanian** is the Pastor of Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno, CA. He and his wife, **Sevan**, have many years of experience in Armenian Evangelical Church music.

The Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus: Development, Identity, Challenges and Spirituality

By Dr. Hrayr Jebejian*

Development

The Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus (AECC) started in 1920. Earlier attempts were made in the 1890s after the Adana massacres. The latter gave rise to a wave of refugees that arrived in Cyprus. AECC was formed when more Armenian refugees arrived after the 1915 Genocide. Rev. Siragan Agbabian delivered his first sermon on July 4, 1920. The first communion service took place in 1898 in Larnaca with 26 members participating. Eighteen of them were former members of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cilicia. The other 6 were new Armenian Evangelical members and 2 from the Greek Orthodox community.

Missionaries from the Reformed Presbyterian Church (USA) had started their ministry in Cyprus in 1888. Revs. Issou and Stevenson, together with their mentor, David Saada, had established a day school with 20 pupils. The following year the number increased to 60.

In 1898, Rev. Haroutyun Sarkisian was appointed by the Reformed Presbyterian missionaries to work among the Armenians. Church buildings were built in Larnaca and Nicosia. According to Rev. Agbabian, these church buildings did not belong to any particular ethnic group. They were open to anyone, but the majority of the attendees were Armenian.

In 1920, the number of Armenians in the Larnaca and Nicosia churches was 45. Rev. Alvin Smith was appointed as the representative of the Presbyterian mission. Rev. Smith "showed special care toward the Armenians and subsequently gained their trust" (Agbabian, p.155). Rev. Agbabian's leadership initiated a change in delivering the sermons to the different language groups



Armenian Evangelical church building, Nicosia, Cyprus.



during the services. It was now delivered in three languages: English, Greek and Turkish for the Armenians. Dr. Samuel Mouradian was a lay preacher who took an active role during the services by translating the sermons into Turkish. A new influx of Armenians, including Evangelicals, reached Cyprus after the French forces left Cilicia. Rev. Haroutyun Manoushagain, who arrived from Adana, served in the Nicosia church for three years.

The Reformed Presbyterian missionaries maintained their leadership role until 1926. In 1927, the church structures in Nicosia and Larnaca were changed and three councils

were formed, one for each of the English, Greek and Armenian communities. In 1929, the number of Armenian Evangelicals in Cyprus reached 283: 5 in Famagusta, 19 in Amiantos, 112 in Larnaca and 147 in Nicosia.

The Armenian Evangelical Church opened a day school, which operated from 1896-1899. It accommodated Armenian refugee children who had escaped the Adana massacres. The two daughters of Rev. Haroutyun Sarkissian, Rakel and Ovsanna, established a kindergarten in Nicosia in 1900. It remained active until 1905. Nishan Ghazarian organized another school in 1900 in Larnaca. An article in the September 7, 1929, issue of *Nor Avedaper* by Rev. Agbabian says this about this school,

The Armenian Evangelical School in Larnaca has 20 students with 3 teachers. Until today, the school used the church premises for its daily classes. Taking into consideration the health-related issues for the youngsters, we have decided this year to initiate the building of school premises, which can cost 300 pounds. The same building will be used for Sunday school classes. The 150 pounds will be raised by the congregation in the next 3 years and the remaining 150 we rely on outside donors. (p.156)

Identity

The AECC, right from its early years, adopted the constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the exception of the following two clauses:

Clause 4: "Do you believe and accept the Reformed Presbyterian North American church conditions on faith, administration and worship order, which are based on the principles of the Bible?"

Clause 8: "Praise is an essential part of the

service where the congregation should participate. The Psalms, which are written in God's revelation, provide the necessary insight and meditation. In this respect, only the Psalms should be used-sung during the worship services and the rest should be omitted."

The debate between the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church on doctrinal and constitutional issues intensified over the years. The Presbyterians allowed the Armenian Evangelicals to sing hymns only during special festive celebrations. Despite this allowance, some missionaries still considered singing a sin, and repetitively brought up the issue for discussion. In July 1954, the two churches decided to separate. On January 1, 1962 the AECC became fully autonomous and independent. According to Rev. Dikran Kherlopian, "The Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus maintained its administrative relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church; nevertheless, it remained spiritually attached with the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East" (*Vosgemadian*, p. 218).

The following years were challenging for the AECC. The Church Council could not decide who to be affiliated with. There were some who wanted to be part of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Others wanted to remain independent, taking into consideration that the civil unrest between the Turks and the Greeks on the island had already started.

In December 1963, the civil fights on the island halted all aspirations and plans. The ethnic fighting and the de-facto demographical divisions between the Turkish and the Greek communities urged the AECC to abandon its premises and move to the Greek side of the island.

Today, the church building is still in the Turkish occupied part of the island. It has been converted to a factory.

That church building was built in 1946. The inauguration was announced thus,

Sunday, July 28 at 5 pm there will be the corner stone ceremony. The church pastor, Rev. Youhanna Megerditchian will lead the service. The corner stone will have a clay plate which will include the Bible, three daily papers one in Armenian (Nor Arax), another in Greek (Anexartidos) and the third one in English (Cyprus Mail). The plate will also include Cyprus coin money together with sand brought from Holy Etchmiadzin and two official writings. (Nor Arax, 1946)

The title deed is in the name of "Armenian Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church" and was issued in 1950. Here is a list of the clergy and lay leaders who were instrumental in leading the AECC in Larnaca and Nicosia:

Rev. Siragan Agbabian (1920-1932)
Rev. Youhanna Megerditchian (1933-1947)
Rev. Hagop Sagherian (1946-1954)
Mr. Manuel Kassouni (1954-1963)
Mr. Levon Yergatian (after 1963)
Mr. Nishan Helvajian (1954-1964)
Mr. Aram Sarkissian (1964-1966)
Mr. Mihran Jizmejian (1966-1970).

It is worth it to make a special acknowledgement of the work and ministry of Mr. Manuel Kassouni. He was Rev. Dr. Yeghia Kassouni's younger brother. Manuel arrived in Larnaca in 1922. He taught Arithmetic, Armenian, Geography and Turkish at the American Academy. He also established a small printing house to print Armenian books and periodicals. He initiated the Armenian Language Group to encourage the Armenian community to speak Armenian. He maintained very good relations with the Armenian Apostolic Church. For decades, Mr. Kassouni tirelessly served the Armenian and Greek communities.

Past and Current Challenges

Between 1963 and 1965 the Church in Nicosia continued its services in the premises of the American Academy. After 1965 services were conducted once every two weeks. Services stopped completely in the early 1970s both in Nicosia and Larnaca for three obvious reasons. First, the Church did not have a spiritual leader after 1954. Second, after 1963 the Church remained without its premises. Third, the community number decreased drastically after the civil unrest, as many left the island. In 1966 the number of Armenian Evangelicals dropped from 230 to 55.

After the Turkish invasion in 1974, the Armenian Apostolic Church, too, lost its church building in Nicosia. However, they and others received compensations from the Cypriot government and other sources and rebuilt their church buildings. The foundation stone of the new Armenian Apostolic Church in Nicosia - Sourp Asdvadzadzin, was laid on September 25, 1976, and was inaugurated in 1981. There are no records which show that the AECC took similar steps in order to rebuild and restart.

The AECC remained dormant until August 2005, when Dr. Hrayr Jebejian and his family moved to Nicosia from Beirut. He reorganized the AECC under the chairmanship of Mrs. Nevart Kassouni-Panayiotides, the daughter of late Mr. Manuel Kassouni. The Church was revitalized. It was registered as The Armenian Evangelical Church in Larnaca, and services were held once a month in the Greek Evangelical Church premises in Nicosia. Church services were also occasionally held in Larnaca. Dr. Jebejian broadcast spiritual messages once a month for four years on the radio from the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation during the Armenian program. Also, the Church organized several spiritual, cultural and national services and programs that were attended by the Armenian community in Cyprus. Revs. Megerditch Karagozian, Paul Haidostian, Vartkes Kassouni, Krikor Ağabaloğlu, Serop Megerditchian, Manuel Jimbashain, Dr. Ari Topouzhanian, Mr. Mihran Jizmejian, and Mrs. Irma Dedeyan were some of the guest speakers who took part in these events.

Today, there are five Armenian Evangelical families. Rightly, Rev. Agbabian writes, "Cyprus for Armenians has always been a transit place. In this respect, the number of the community has not increased over the years. But the Gospel Message has been proclaimed for all the Armenians who have lived on the island over the years" (Agbabian, p.156).

The vision is to reclaim the church building, reorganize the church services, reestablish ecumenical relationships, and reassume a leadership role in the spiritual growth of the community. □

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Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East

History at a Glance



By **Rosette Alemian***

The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) is an autonomous body of Armenian Evangelical churches comprising 25 congregations throughout Australia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. The UAECNE, previously known as the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria and Lebanon, is the continuance of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Cilicia. Those who survived the Armenian Genocide formed the timber around which the Armenian Evangelical Community was founded in the Near East. The Union's first General Assembly was held in Aleppo April 30-May 3, 1924. In 1937, the Armenian Evangelical community in Syria was recognized by the government. The previous Presidents of UAECNE include Rev. Dr. Hovhannes Aharonian and Rev. Dr. Hovhannes Karjian. Currently the President is Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian and the Chair of the Central Committee is Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.

In the early years of the 1900s Armenian refugees gathered in different camps and built churches and schools. Later, they left them and established communities in larger cities in the Near East. Some of the churches and schools do not exist anymore, while new ones were founded over the years.

In this brief history, we will present the churches and institutions that are under the auspices of the UAECNE.

A. CHURCHES

Australia - Sydney

On May 12, 1966, the **Armenian Evangelical Church of Sydney** was founded in Naremburn, a suburb on the lower North Shore of Sydney, under the leadership of Brother Khachig Khachigian. In 1985, the Church moved to Willoughby. In 1996, the inauguration of a new church building was held under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian, Pastor of the Church at the time. Since October 2010, the Pastor of the Church has been Rev. Hagop Sarkissian.

Cyprus

In course of the British entering Cyprus many Armenian Evangelicals settled on the island and joined the Armenian Apostolic church. Later in 1887 most of them joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church. On July 28, 1946, Rev. Yohanna Der Mgerditchian inaugurated the Armenian Evangelical Church in ancient Nicosia. During the Turkish invasion of the island (1973-74) Armenians left the ancient city. However, the Armenian Evangelicals continued to hold worship services in the American Academy. (Read the story of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus on pages 12-13 of this issue.)

Egypt

The Armenian Evangelical Community in Egypt was formed as early as the 19th century. In 1936, the Church membership was about 800. The first Pastor of the **Armenian Evangelical Church in Cairo** was Megrditch Knajian (1899-1911) and the last Pastor who served the Church until it closed its doors due to emigration of the community members was Brother Vahram Khounganian.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Alexandria was established by Rev. Mihran Knajian. The church building was constructed in 1949. Currently a small number of people gather under the leadership of lay preacher Dr. Samuel Khounganian.

Greece

In 1921, 3,000 Armenian Evangelicals were members of churches in four districts in Athens (Derguty, Singroui, Kokkinia, Lipamagi) and in Selanig. Due to political ups and downs, Armenians immigrated to



The Headquarters of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East in Beirut, Lebanon.

the Motherland during 1947-48, diminishing the number of community members. In 1948, Armenian Evangelicals counted 120 families in Greece.

Currently only the Kokkinia church operates. The first official preacher was Rev. Roupen Kayayan (1923-27). In 1928 the church building, a school and hall were constructed. The kindergarten operated until 2017. Rev. Krikor Demirjian served the church for the longest period. Since 2004 Rev. Vicken Cholakian has served as the Pastor of the Church in Kokkinia.

Iran - Tehran

The **Armenian Evangelical Church of Iran** was founded in Tabriz through American missionaries working in the Bible Society. In 1876 **Sourp Hovhannes Church** was founded in Mirza Shirazi, Tehran. Currently there are two other acting churches in Tehran – The **Hokeshounch Church** in Majidieh, Tehran and the **Shnorhali Church** in Zakesh, Tehran. The first ordained Minister was Rev. Mihran Dambourjian. Currently the Pastors of the churches in Tehran are Rev. Sergey Shahverdian, Rev. Dr. Michel Aghamalian and Rev. Vazrik Safarian.

Iraq - Baghdad

Due to political instabilities in Iraq, the Armenian community eventually diminished, and so did the Armenian Evangelicals. The **Armenian Evangelical Church in Baghdad** was reestablished in 2004 during the war to inspire hope and inner peace in the hearts of believers. Currently about 110 people gather every Sunday under the leadership of Brother Norek Hovsepian. The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the UAECNE together contribute to help people survive in these dark days. In 2008 during a street fight, a section of the Church was burnt. Thanks to the AMAA, the building was renovated, and worship services continued.

Jordan

The presence of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Jordan is connected with the Church of the Nazarene, which, as a continuation of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Cilicia, greatly contributed to the spread of spiritual and educational life. The Armenian Evangelical Church of Amman operated under the auspices of the Nazarene Church. The Armenian Evan-



Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Church of Kessab, Syria. Established in 1853, Kessab Church is one of the oldest churches of UAECNE.

gelical Church life has stopped due to the emigration of many community members.

Lebanon

Between the years 1922 and 1926, many Armenian refugees who had survived the Armenian Genocide settled in Beirut and lived in the outskirts of the city under extremely poor conditions. For some time, two churches were operating under the name of Armenian Evangelical First Church. In 1926, these two churches started to function independently of each other. The Church, which was in the outskirts of Beirut, later moved to Ashrafieh. In 1949, the First Church bought a property on Mexique Street and the building of a sanctuary took about 10 years. The Church was officially named **The First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut**.

In 1931, Rev. Henry Riggs, in memory of his late wife and daughter, donated land in the Ashrafieh quarter. In 1932, the building of the church and school commenced, and later new sections were added. The church was called **The Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh**.

After the Armenian Genocide, in the years 1930-32, some 2,200 families settled in the Bourj Hammoud area. In 1934, **The Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash** was founded by Rev. Garabed Hassessian who served until 1942. Since 2015 Rev. Raffi Messerlian is the Pastor of the Church.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Anjar was founded in 1941. The first Pastor was Rev. Aram Hadidian who came with his congregation from Musa Dagh to Anjar and continued serving in the village. The current Pastor of the Church is Hagop Akbasharian.

In 1970, **The Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Amanos** was inaugurated. The founding Pastor was Rev. Vahram Salibian. After the untimely death of Pastor Sevag Trashian in 2020 the pulpit is still vacant.

The Syriac Evangelical Church of Beirut was founded in 1965. Currently the Pastor is Rev. Selim Sabounji.

Syria

The Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church was officially founded in 1923. Its early membership was mainly deportees from the Marash Armenian Evangelical community in Cilicia. The current Pastor is Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian, who is also the head of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria.

The Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church in Aleppo is one of the oldest Armenian Evangelical Churches, established in 1852 (in the old city). The current Church building in Azizieh was erected in 1923. The Emmanuel Church was damaged after being shelled by rebels on January 17, 2016 and renovated in 2018. Currently the pulpit of the Church is vacant.

In 1931, seventeen members of the former Hayik Church came together and founded the **Armenian Evangelical Naha-dagatz (Martyrs') Church** in Aleppo. The church is in the Suleymanie quarter, Aleppo. The current Pastor is Simon Der Sahagian.

Christ Church in Aleppo was founded in 1922. Rev. Barkev Apartian served there for many years. Currently Rev. Bshara Mousa Oghly serves the Church.

The Armenian Evangelical community existed in **Homs** since 1949. Until 2011, Sunday services were held with visiting pastors, which was closed due to the Syrian civil war.

In 1922, Armenian Evangelicals settled in **Damascus** and counted 450 people. Due to political and Church disturbances the Damascus church community diminished. The last Pastor was Datev Basmajian (2005-2010).

The Armenian Evangelical Church in Kessab goes back to 1853. In 1970, the Inauguration of **Saint Trinity Church in Kessab** took place (originally built early in the 20th century but not completed). The **Ekiz Olouk, Keorkuneh, and Kaladouran** villages have churches as well. The current Pastor is Shant Agishian.

Syriac Evangelical Church in Aleppo was founded in 1925. The first Pastor was Rev. Dikran Kherlopian (1927-31). The last full-time Pastor was Rev. Yousef Ousda Jabbour. Currently the pulpit is vacant.

Turkey – Istanbul

On July 1, 1846 the first **Armenian Evangelical Church** was founded in **Pera** (Istanbul) with 40 members. The first Pastor

was Apisoghom Khachadourian (Utujian). In 1848, the number of Church members was 99. The Pera Church building was constructed in 1904. Currently, Ms. Sona Özpenbe leads the Sunday worship services.

The **Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Paşa** was established in 1850. On January 16, 1921, the ground floor of Gedik Pasa Church was constructed. Since 1990 Rev. Krikor Ağabalıoğlu has been the Pastor of the Church. In 2003, the Hrant Dink School was established on the premises of the Church for Armenian children coming from the Motherland.

For many years worship services were also conducted in the **Bible House** which was registered as the third Church of UAECNE in Istanbul.

Hrant Guzelian was the founder of **Camp Armen**, which was used as a shelter and education center for children who were brought from inner cities of Turkey. Hrant Dink and his wife Rakel were raised and educated there.

B. SCHOOLS

Lebanon

The first Armenian Evangelical School in Lebanon was founded in Beirut (1922). Until 1960, there were more than 15 Armenian Evangelical schools operating in Lebanon. Currently there are only four active Armenian Evangelical schools.

Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut was founded in 1923 with grades KG to High School. The current Principal is Dr. Armen Urneshlian.

Armenian Evangelical Central High School of Ashrafieh was founded in 1922, with grades KG to High School. The current Principal is Maral Deyirmenjian.

Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School-Bourj Hammoud (Nor Marash) was founded in 1934, with grades KG to 10th (High School). The current Principal is Vartoug Balekjian.

Armenian Evangelical Secondary School-Anjar was founded in 1940 with classes from KG to High School and a Boarding section. The Principal is Pastor Hagop Akbasharian.

Syria

In Syria, Armenian Evangelicals founded numerous schools, mainly in Aleppo, Damascus and Kessab. Currently in Syria there are only five Armenian Evangelical active schools.

Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel School (Aleppo) was founded in 1855 when the Armenian Evangelical Community started to shape in Aleppo. After WWI in 1921 the School opened and moved to Kastal Joura quarter and in 1931 to a new building in Azizie quarter and finally it moved to the Aleppo College campus. Currently, most of the students are non-Armenians.

Armenian Evangelical Bethel School (Aleppo) was founded in 1923. The founder was Hovhannes Haidostian, who taught there until 1941. In 2004-2005 the School added an elementary section and later the high school section. The current Principal is Arousyag Artinian Hallajian.

Syriac Evangelical School (Aleppo) was founded in 1932 on the Syriac Church campus. The Principal now is Sonaly Ghazal.

Armenian Evangelical Martyrs School (Kessab) has existed since 1848 due to the efforts of the missionary Miss Chambers. In 1909, the Turkish forces burnt the School building during their invasion of the Kessab area. Later the School building was renovated and opened its doors back in 1924. The current Principal is Ani Boymoushakian.

Armenian Evangelical School (Damascus) was founded in 1923 in a large room, where 40-50 students gathered. In 1950 KG and Elementary sections were added and enrollment was about 100 (Armenians and non-Armenians). Currently the students are non-Armenian.



Armenian Evangelical Shamlian Tatigian Secondary School in Nor Marash, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon.

Armenian Evangelical Secondary School for Girls-Aleppo College founded in 1930 is a continuation of Central Turkey College (Aintab). At first most of the students were Armenians and many of its graduates achieved high levels of education and positions all over the world. Later when American Missionaries left Syria, the campus was handed over to the UAECNE (girl's section and Arab Presbyterian Synod boy's section) to run it. The current Principal is Tamar Soghoyan.

C. HIGHER EDUCATION

Haigazian University was founded on October 17, 1955 by the AMAA and the UAECNE as a liberal arts college to prepare teachers and pastors. When the University (then College) opened in 1955, there were 43 students enrolled. Student enrollment reached 740 before the start of the civil disturbances in Lebanon in 1975. Haigazian University is the only higher education institution in the Armenian Diaspora, and was named in memory of Armenag Haigazian, who was martyred in a Harpur jail in 1921. The first President of the University was Rev. Dr. John Markarian. Since 2002, the President has been Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D. Thousands of Haigazian University graduates have contributed to Lebanon's and nearby countries educational, economical and spiritual fields. Haigazian University has established close relationships with universi-

ties in Armenia and Artsakh, and with other international universities.

The Near East School of Theology was founded in 1930 by missionaries in the Near East, seeking to strengthen theological education in the area and uniting the theological institutions in Athens and Beirut. In the spring of that year, after a period of negotiations between the Syria Mission (Presbyterian) and the Near East Mission (Congregational), an agreement was reached for the two schools to merge and form the new Near East School of Theology in Beirut. The merger was consummated on November 11, 1932, with Gaius Greenslade as Principal and Loutfi Levonian as Dean. In 1971, the School moved to its new home: a modern, well equipped building in Ras Beirut. The credit for this considerable achievement goes above all to the President at the time the late Rev. Dr. Hovhannes Aharonian, who, from 1959 until his retirement in 1978, presided over the destiny of the School. Currently the President is Dr. George Sabra and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees is Rev. Megrdoch Karagozian.

D. PUBLICATIONS

Armenian Evangelicals valued most reading the Bible and spiritual literature. The first Spiritual paper, the **Nor Avedaper**, was published in Beirut, on November 5, 1927 by Rev. Dikran Kherlopian. In 1936 Rev. Manasseh Shnorhokian started publishing

the bi-weekly **Badanegan Artzakank** and in 1937 the Christian Endeavor Society of UAECNE started publishing **Chanasser**. Both continue to be published today.

Louys, the translation of Upper Room daily devotional booklet has been published since 1939.

The **Christian Family Calendar** with different themes has been published since 1934.

Kalfayan Press (in memory of AMAA's former Executive Secretary, the late Rev. Puzant Kalfayan) moved to its new building in KCHAG and operated until the Lebanese war started. Many books, school yearbooks, hymn books, Bible workbooks and papers were edited and published by the UAECNE Publication office.

E. MUSICAL FIELD

Spiritual hymn books - Generally the Armenian hymns are translations of International hymns. Numerous hymnals have been published over the years. Currently most churches use the UAECNE "Hokevor yerker" hymnbook and the "Spiritual Songs for Worship" hymnbook prepared by Rev. Eflaton Elmajian. Later, Rev. Nerses Balabanian prepared "Nor Yerker Yerketzek Deroch" hymnbook for the youth.

Choirs - During the 1960s and 1970s Dr. Emmanuel Elmajian conducted the **Armenian Evangelical United Choir** in Beirut, Lebanon. The **Armis Choir** was founded in 1980 in Beirut and conducted by Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian and later by Rev. Nerses Balabanian, Rev. Nishan Bakalian, Nabil Melki, Maestro Garo Avesian, and since 2018 again by Rev. Nishan Bakalian.

The **Dzirani Children's Choir** was founded and conducted by Rev. Nishan Bakalian (2003-2006).

The **Nor Yerker Band** was founded and led by Rev. Nerses Balabanian in 1993 and gave concerts in 12 countries around the world. The Band was revived in 2015 in Lebanon during the Syrian Civil War and later in 2016 in Montreal QC, Canada for Syrian Armenians relocated in Canada. Besides the "Nor Yerker Yerketzek Deroch" hymnbook, the Nor Yerker Band released eight CDs.

In Syria, the **Armenian Evangelical Armis Conservatory** operates in Bethel Church campus, and before the Syrian War



UAECNE Publications: Chanasser, Badanegan Artsakank, Louys and Christian Family Calendar.

another Conservatory operated in Missakian Cultural Center in Kessab

The **Zank Youth Band** in Aleppo was led by Rev. Nerses Balabanian.

The **Genatz Youth Band** in Damascus was led by Serop Seropian. The last performance of the Orchestra was in 1996 during the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Paris.

F. CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY FOR YOUTH AND ADOLESCENTS

After the Armenian Genocide, during the years 1923-24 the **Christian Endeavour (CE) Society** continued its mission in Syria and Lebanon due to the efforts of Nejib Shirikjian and Hovhannes Shnorhokian. The CE Executive Committee of Lebanon and Syria holds an annual General Assembly and new members are elected. Currently the Chairperson is Garine Cholakian and the Youth Coordinator is Pastor Datev Basmajian. The CE Union mostly coordinates the youth ministries of local churches and at the same time it runs two summer camp sites - KCHAG (Monte Verdi-Lebanon and Kessab-Syria) where various groups (Children, Teenage, Youth and Young couples) hold their summer camps and conferences.

G. SOCIAL SERVICES

Social services are fundamental actions of Armenian Evangelicals. Caring for needy people, especially during tough times in the

Middle East is the main goal of the Social Centers.

Lebanon

Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center (Trad) serves needy people from the area by providing food, medical service and education. The Director is Lena Danaghlian.

UAECNE is a partner of the **Armenian National Sanatorium in Azounieh** and **CAHL** (the Centers for the Armenian Handicapped in Lebanon) which operates an Old Age Home for the elderly.

Syria

The **Bethel Polyclinic and Dental Clinic** operates in the Bethel church campus and **Bedhesda Medical and Dental Clinic** in Christ/Action Chrétienne en Orient Church campus both in Aleppo. The Armenian Evangelical Community of Syria is a partner of the **Aleppo Old Age Home**.

H. INTER-CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS

Founding Memberships

UAECNE is founding member of **World Council of Churches-WCC**, **Middle East Council of Churches-MECC** (founded in 1974 and its first President Rev. Dr. Hovhannes Aharonian), **Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches-FMEEC**, and the **World Communion of Reformed Churches-WCRC**.

Other Memberships and Fellowship

The UAECNE is a member of the **Supreme Council of the Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon** (Current President Rev. Joseph Kassab and Executive Secretary Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian), and **Action Chrétienne en Orient** of Strasbourg, France.

Close Cooperation

The UAECNE cooperates with the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the National Evangelical Church of Beirut, the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia and the Catholicosate of All Armenians of Holy Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate.

Inter Armenian Evangelical

The UAECNE is a member of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). □



*** Rosette Alemian** is the Director of UAECNE Publications Office.

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AMAA NEWS will in successive issues publish the history of the remaining Armenian Evangelical Unions worldwide.



KCHAG - Christian Endeavor Summer Camp in Monteverde, Aïn Saâdé, Lebanon.



Youth at KCHAG.

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL BETHEL CHURCH AND SCHOOL COMPLEX ALEPPO, SYRIA

The history of the Armenian Evangelical Church is filled with horror stories of massacres, deportations and deprivation. Before the Genocide, the main group of Armenian Evangelicals in Syria were those in Kessab. However, most Armenian Evangelicals arrived in Syria because of the horrific crime of Genocide. History shows that the Armenian masses who arrived in Aleppo in the aftermath of the Genocide settled in the Jabriye and Suleymaniye areas of the city. The conditions they experienced there were more than tragic, but the need to survive made them regroup and start churches and schools. This happened at a time when the so-called civilized world treated the defeated Turkey as a winner and the Ottoman Empire Christians suffered calamities probably far worse than at any other time in recent history.

The survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide settled in tents and later in shacks in Aleppo. That is where the Armenian churches and schools came back to life. Widows and orphans built a new form of Armenia, which could not be imagined without churches and schools. With the deportation of the Armenians at the end of 1921, having a Church was important for the refugees. In this context, the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church was founded in 1922, followed by the Bethel School in 1923 along with the other Armenian Evangelical Churches in other suburbs of Aleppo.

During the past 99 years, The Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church has had 19 pastors in addition to interim pastors who served while the Church waited for the next pastor to take over. All of them have been a blessing to the Armenian believers and have served the community in a selfless way. While preaching

the Word, they continued to instill in the Armenian people their responsibility to carry on their Christian heritage, to demonstrate it in their lives, and to pass the message from generation to generation.

Today's beautiful Bethel Church, once called Camp Bethel Church, was built in a refugee camp in a hacienda called al-Hamidiye, which was also used as a School. The American Missionary Board initiated the construction of a wooden hall for educational and religious purposes. Some older Armenians still remember that the Bethel Church classrooms were separated by mere curtains. The hall used as a Church was extended later, when another small hall was attached to it to welcome the kindergarten classes and Sunday-school students, as well as the Chanits youth (Christian Endeavour meetings).

The Church was not only used for worship on Sundays. Right from the beginning it was a place for those yearning for spiritual nourishment and fellowship. During the morning hours, the ladies came for their own devotional time, whereas Armenian Churches in other parts of the world held Dignants (Ladies' Meetings) once a week. Throughout the years, the Church activities were



Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church.



Bethel Church Youth participate in a group study time.



Bethel Church Ladies Group.

multifaceted and geared to all ages with an able volunteer staff to teach and preach.

Most of the founders of Camp Bethel Church were survivors of the Marash Armenian Evangelical Churches, who were mainly laborers, elderly, widows and orphans, as the Turks had first and foremost aimed at exterminating the intellectuals and the lay leadership of the Church. Consequently, there was a major shortage of pastors and preachers.

The most recent and major blow to the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria was the Syrian War that started in 2011 and is still ongoing. Aleppo was the main battlefield from July 2012 until January 2017.

Throughout the years of tension and challenges, the pastors and leaders have done their very best to see that the Armenian Evangelical Church community and their neighbors will be taken care of and nurtured both spiritually and physically. Today, there are many activities in the churches of Aleppo. Currently the Bethel Church is run effectively by its active Pastor Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian who still believes there is a future for the Armenians in Aleppo and wants the Armenians to be part of the rebuilding of this ancient City.

The Church faithfully continues its Sunday worship services as well as Sunday School, Youth Group, Junior High Group, Ladies' Meeting, Bible study group, young couples' ministry, "Armiss"



Armenian Evangelical Bethel High School.



Dentist at work at Bethel Polyclinic.



Construction of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church.

conservatory, "Bethel" polyclinic and the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School which has been raised to the High School Level since early 2000s. Throughout the years we can clearly feel the guidance and wisdom of our Lord as we put ourselves in His service. And the founders of Bethel Church look down upon us from Heaven and rejoice that the Church is still vibrantly showing the right path toward the love of God Almighty and active love for our neighbors. □



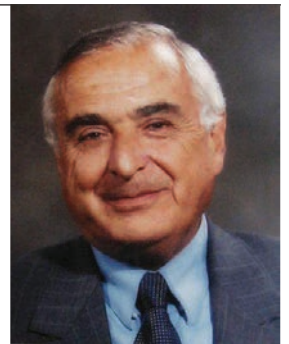
Bethel Church Sunday School on Palm Sunday.

Abundant Life

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly.
John 10:10

By Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.*

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), which was born in the bosom of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of the United States of America on June 7, 1918, had one purpose, "to strengthen the spiritual life of our churches and rebuild the ruined churches of the Fatherland." From its inception as a recognized non-profit organization in 1921 to August 9, 2003, the Association was led by clergymen who recognized their dual role as spiritual and administrative leaders. Therefore, the AMAA is the benevolent arm of the Armenian Evangelical churches.



After 100 years of diligent service, has the mission changed? Is the AMAA a charitable or humanitarian organization whose purpose is crisis management? To fulfill its mission does it need catastrophic humanitarian situations or drastic financial need to function as an ATM Machine?

Doubtless the AMAA was born as a response to the Armenian Genocide, to help the survivors to live and build educational and religious institutions around the world, so these displaced and oppressed people could constitute their own communities. The churches inspired these individuals to develop courage for life and hope for the future. The schools empowered many to become leaders one of which is the Chairman of the Moderna Pharmaceutical Company which produced the COVID-19 vaccine.

The critical question arises when there is no crisis. Does the mission end? If charity and humanitarianism are contingent on human suffering, what happens to the mission when there is no suffering. For an answer I sought the wisdom of Jesus who defined His mission saying, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Therefore, the mission of Jesus was to bring 'abundant life,' a better state than the one human beings find themselves in. But when we hear the word abundant, we imagine living in mansions, driving luxury cars, etc. Was Jesus preaching the Gospel of health, wealth and happiness? Did His mission aim at serving our endless ego needs? The answer is no. On the contrary, His mission calls us to step out of our ego-centered orientation into the grandness of serving as God's instruments of grace.

In the New Testament the term "superabundance" refers either to God's grace and righteousness poured forth in Christ or to the overflowing Christian joy that enables a person to be generous despite one's material poverty. The source of this abundant life of which Jesus is talking is God's love which is all inclusive and limitless. God's grace functions in good times and bad times. Thus, we love because He loved us first. The Christian concept of love is not based on a transactional command, but on a response to God's love which we have experienced in the creation and revelation. God's creative love is present in the tiniest flower or giant tree. Christ is the embodiment of God's grace. Therefore, as His followers, we help the needy as well as the well to do, for each has his or her special need for the abundant life.

Therefore, the AMAA has the calling to promote "the abundant life." Simply put, the Association's mission is to promote the common good and make life better for all who fall under its radar. It fulfills its mission by presenting the Good News in word and action. Its mission entails nourishing the hunger of the body and soul, helping those searching for the meaning of life as well as those looking for medication for their body or mind.

The supporters, leadership and staff of the AMAA are the brains, the hands, and feet of Christ who wants to bring the Gospel of healing and the abundant life to our broken world. Sometimes under the pressure of work, our interactions get massy, and we feel discouraged; during those cloudy days when the shadows lurking in us come out, do not let the darkness overcome your light; for we are called and have chosen to be the instruments of grace in the world through the AMAA. May God continue to bless the good work of the AMAA. □

* Rev. Dr. John Khanjian is the former President of Haigazian University of Beirut, Lebanon.

Benefiting from the Genocide

(Reflections on the 106th Anniversary of the Armenian Martyrs' Day)

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian*

There is a particular bitterness in this year's commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Following last fall's devastating attacks on Armenia and the Armenian region of Artsakh, death, loss, humiliation and shame have covered the Armenian people the world over, as they reel from their defeat and are unsure of the direction their leaders are taking them, whether in Armenia or throughout the Armenian Diaspora. On the other hand, the victors, Azerbaijan and Turkey, continue to revel in the devastation and harm they have caused, using Armenian corpses and captives as bargaining chips, putting on display in Baku captured war materiel, helmets of dead Armenians, and mannequins of Armenian soldiers that visiting children can take turns strangling.

During that war, people of faith and religious leaders – with notable exceptions – raised their voices in outrage and protest over this unprovoked attack on civilians, designed to drive them from their ancestral homes, churches and historical regions. It was a conflict fully predictable by analysts, and fully expected by Armenians, though made all the more devastating by the lack of adequate preparation in the prior three decades of cease-fire in the Caucasus. Simply put, it was a continuation of the race extermination policy conceived in Ottoman Turkey in the 1800s, conducted by them with great success in the 1900s, and now being pursued to its logical conclusion in the 2000s.

A massive disinformation campaign by both sides accompanied the armed conflict. Armenians were duped by their own leaders into thinking that they were ably defending their historic lands, homes, churches and schools, with a minimum of human loss. Taking a more calculating approach, Azerbaijan and Turkey had over the years spent large amounts of money funding international organizations and ensuring arms, energy and trade agreements, essentially buying others' tacit cooperation in this military action as they denied the clear evidence of the war crimes they were committing.

Over the past century, the struggle for recognition of the Armenian Genocide seemed to gain "good will" for Armenians, as nations came to make official pronouncements recognizing the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1922, and even in some cases acknowledging the genocides that they themselves had conducted on their own populations. This cause was deemed a righteous one, and countries supporting this recognition appeared to occupy the "moral high ground."

The war exposed the market value of that "good will." Armenians, whose idealism often impairs their ability to govern themselves, were

left dazed at the lack of actual intervention by any government to back up the sympathetic statements to "stop the bloodshed." Armenians, as well as all people of faith, began to realize that the world does not act according to moral principles, but according to interests and threats. As in 1915, so also in 2020 the principle of self-determination of any indigenous people will always be met with non-interference, and the principle of gains and losses will remain primary.

War and genocide have always been highly profitable in "the kingdom of this earth." They are not unique to the Armenian situation. Jesus illustrated this principle in his parable, where God's enemies stated, "Let us kill the heir and take his inheritance" (Mt. 21:38). It is a refrain ever sung by the beneficiaries of "ethnic cleansing" of

indigenous peoples from their homes and heritage. It describes the genesis – and sometimes current status – of many countries in today's world.

But this refrain is something that must stir the prophetic hearts of people of faith to challenge those policies that crush entire races and groups. It is evident in the courageous testimonies of the Old Testament prophets, as well as the truth Christ Jesus and the early church spoke to the religious and secular powers, repeatedly seen in the New Testa-

ment. When Jesus honored the poor widow who dropped her last few coins in the temple treasury (Luke 21:1-4), He was at the same time condemning the rapacious authorities who made their gains from the pure, simple devotion of the insignificant and forgotten people who love God and whom God loves dearly (Luke 20:45-47).

On April 24 each year the hopes and fears of Armenians come to a critical mass; and only the strength that comes from faith in Christ will sustain them and many other oppressed peoples in this protracted struggle for justice, mercy and peace to cover the earth. The benefits and blessings of God's rule are eternal, and God calls all of us to partake in this, every day and in all places. □



* **Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian** is the Coordinator of Church Relations of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Rev. Bakalian's ministry in Lebanon is supported jointly by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.



The Armenian Missionary Association of America Welcomes President Biden's Statement Recognizing the Armenian Genocide

God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed. Ecclesiastes 3:17

Marking the 106th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks, US President Joe Biden, following his campaign promise, officially issued a statement on April 24, 2021, recognizing the atrocities and calling the massacres of one and a half million Armenians as Genocide. Indeed, President Biden's statement complements the recognition by the US House of Representatives and Senate of the Armenian Genocide in the fall of 2019.

The crime of genocide does not adhere to any statute of limitations. With this acknowledgment, we have now entered a new phase of struggle toward our quest for justice, be it for the crime committed a century or a year ago. We thank President Biden for his courageous moral stance on the Armenian Genocide and trust that God will deliver justice for the crime of the 'murder of a nation.'

We invite all other nations who have not yet recognized the Armenian Genocide to step up on the moral ladder, follow the example of President Biden and courageously call the annihilation of one and half million Armenians during World War I – the first Genocide of the twentieth century.

Thank you President Biden for your courage and superb moral standard.



Statement by President Joe Biden on Armenian Remembrance Day - April 24, 2021

Each year on this day, we remember the lives of all those who died in the Ottoman-era Armenian Genocide and recommit ourselves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring. Beginning on April 24, 1915, with the arrest of Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople by Ottoman authorities, one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in a campaign of extermination. We honor the victims of the Meds Yeghern so that the horrors of what happened are never lost to history. And we remember so that we remain ever-vigilant against the corrosive influence of hate in all its forms.

Of those who survived, most were forced to find new homes and new lives around the world, including in the United States. With strength and resilience, the Armenian people survived and rebuilt their community. Over the decades Armenian immigrants have enriched the United States in countless ways, but they have never forgotten the tragic history that brought so many of their ancestors to our shores. We honor their story. We see that pain. We affirm the history. We do this not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated.

Today, as we mourn what was lost, let us also turn our eyes to the future—toward the world that we wish to build for our children. A world unstained by the daily evils of bigotry and intolerance, where human rights are respected, and where all people are able to pursue their lives in dignity and security. Let us renew our shared resolve to prevent future atrocities from occurring anywhere in the world. And let us pursue healing and reconciliation for all the people of the world.

The American people honor all those Armenians who perished in the Genocide that began 106 years ago today.



Call to the Political Elite in the Homeland

With extreme anxiety and deep concern we follow the current existential crisis in the Homeland and the alienation of cohesive dialogue, mutual respect and concession over a common cause. We are cognizant that answers are sought not only on the recent Artsakh war, but also on blatant failures in security, defense, and diplomacy over the past quarter century.

We are convinced that the Homeland needs a national leadership that inspires confidence to all its citizens and finds its way through the realm of the law in the perimeters of the country's constitution.

In view of the current mounting threat to Armenia's peace, progress, prosperity and national unity, we call on all parties to lay aside their differences in the name of the Homeland and the sublime interests of the Armenian nation and gather around a table to formulate a mutually agreed plan for snap elections.

We wholeheartedly pray that all national, political and institutional leadership use their political wisdom to secure lasting peace and tranquility in Armenia.

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director
Armenian Evangelical World Council

Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO
Armenian Missionary Association of America

March 2, 2021

Կո՛չ Հայրենի Քաղաքական Աւագանիին

Խոր անձկութեամբ եւ յուզումով կը հետեւինք Հայաստան Աշխարհի Ներկայ ճգնաժամային անցուդարձերուն եւ իրարամերժ ոգիով արտայայտուած քաղաքական միտքերուն եւ ուղղութիւններուն: Իրազեկ ենք այն իրողութեան, որ արդարօրէն պատասխաններ կը փնտռուին ոչ միայն Արցախեան վերջին պատերազմի մասին, այլ նաեւ անցնող Քառորդ դարու անվտանգութեան, պաշտպանութեան եւ դիւանագիտական ծախքերու մեջէն ի յայտ եկած ծախողութիւններուն համար:

Համոզուած ենք, որ Հայրենիքը պէտք ունի վստահութիւն ներշնչող իշխանութեան մը, որ իր ուղին գտնէ երկրի սահմանադրութեան պարագիծի մէջ ակօսուած օրէնքի ճանապարհով:

Ի տես Հայաստանի խաղաղութեան սպառնացող Ներկայ վտանգին եւ համազգային բնոյթ ունեցող քաղաքական այս տագնապին, այսու, կոչ կ'ընենք բոլոր կողմերուն յանուն հայրենիքի եւ հայ ազգի գերագոյն շահերուն մէկդի դնել տարբերութիւնները եւ հաւաքուիլ սեղանի մը շուրջ տնօրինելու արտակարգ ընտրութիւններու շուրջ համաձայնուած ծրագիր մը:

Ի բոլոր սրտէ կ'աղօթենք, որ հայրենի քաղաքական եւ կուսակցական ղեկավարները իրենց քաղաքական իմաստութիւնը գործածեն ի սեր Հայաստանի անդորրութեան եւ խաղաղութեան:

Վեր. Վահան Յ. Թութիկեան, Գործադիր Տնօրէն
Հայ Աւետարանական Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդ

Չաւեն Խանճեան, Գործադիր Տնօրէն
Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւն

Մարտ 2, 2021



Armenia's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Visits AMAA Headquarters

On Friday, April 30, 2021, the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs in Armenia, Zareh Sinanyan, visited the AMAA's Headquarters in Paramus, NJ. AMAA Executive Director/CEO, Zaven Khanjian, gave Mr. Sinanyan a tour of the building and introduced AMAA's Vice President and Treasurer, Dr. Nurhan Helvacian and Board Members, John Cherkezian, Berjouhy Gulesserian and Dr. Michael Voskian. The meeting started with a prayer, followed by discussions about post-war status in Armenia and Artsakh, new and ongoing projects at the office of High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, and about collaborative opportunities. □

L to R: John Cherkezian, Dr. Nurhan Helvacian, Zareh Sinanyan, Zaven Khanjian, Berjouhy Gulesserian and Dr. Michael Voskian.



Celebratory Events of 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Armenia Postponed



July 1, 2021 marks the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

In the Jan-Feb-March 2021 issue of the AMAA News we had announced that in celebration of this ostensible milestone, the Armenian Evangelical World Council had formed a special Celebratory Committee to plan and implement appropriate celebratory events on and around July 1, 2021 in Armenia.

For the past 15 months, the Celebratory Committee has been diligently planning a host of activities in the Homeland in June and July 2021. Most of the activities required travel and physical presence in Armenia.

In consideration of the continuing uncertainties and concerns over the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee in its meeting of April 5, 2021, decided to postpone all celebratory activities in Armenia until the year 2022. This includes the All Armenian Evangelical Youth Conference at the AMAA Sheen Shoghik Camp in Hankavan, Armenia.

We are saddened by this decision and are confident you are too. However, the safety and security of all potential participants is tantamount in the Committee's mind, a concern that has dictated this postponement.

While all travel and attendance related activities have been moved to 2022, the 175th Anniversary Commemorative Book, edited and compiled by the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, is complete and published.

It is worthwhile to remind you all that the Committee chose Hebrews 10:23 as the theme of the global 175th celebration -

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful"

Անխախտ Պահենք Մեր Հաւատքը

The Armenian Evangelical Unions around the globe, in a manner of their choice, will celebrate this anniversary on July 1, 2021. Please hold your appetite for the collective celebration to better days in 2022.

As we come out of our Lord's glorious resurrection celebration, please keep the church, our nation and humanity in your prayers seeking mercy and grace from God. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

Zaven Khanjian, Chair
AEWC 175th Celebratory Committee



AMAA Sunday Celebrated Down Under

By Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia (AMA-Australia) canceled the March 2020 visit of the President of the Hrant Dink Foundation, Hrant's widow, Rakel Dink. For Mrs. Dink's visit to Sydney and Melbourne, AMA-Australia had planned several programs, which included AMAA Sunday Worship Service at the Armenian Evangelical Church, a Cultural Night organized with the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANCA) and the Annual Banquet in support of the *Hrant Dink Armenian School in Istanbul*, as well as a gathering in Melbourne. Sadly, all the events were canceled just one week before.

After such a terrible, challenging and tragic year, we were glad that things started to change in Australia. With the easing of restrictions, AMA-Australia Board members decided to celebrate an important milestone, the 20th Anniversary of AMA-Australia with a special AMAA Sunday Service at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sydney on Sunday March 14, 2021. A limited number of guests and AMAA supporters attended.

The service was led by Rev. Hagop Sarkissian, Minister of the Church, with Jacques Mousa Oghly leading the Responsive Reading and offering the opening prayer. AMA-Australia President and CEO Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian gave a brief report about the many achievements

of AMA-Australia during the past 20 years. Due to travel restrictions, AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian and Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian were not able to travel to Australia, but sent their video messages, which were projected on the screen during the service.

Dr. Darakjian praised God that 20 years ago the Armenian Evangelical community of Australia had the vision to start AMA-Australia, modeled after AMA-America which was established in Worcester, MA in 1918. This new organization essentially united the Armenian Evangelical community in Australia and America, sharing the same vision and the mission to work together to strengthen the churches, schools and humanitarian programs in Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian Diaspora. *"Unity in purpose"* is what propelled the original founders of AMA-Australia, and it is his hope that AMA-Australia will continue to work together pursuing common goals for many more years to come. Dr. Darakjian concluded his message by congratulating the Evangelical community and the membership and leadership of AMA-Australia.

In his message, Mr. Khanjian said: "The year 2020 was not envisioned to be the way it was. The year was full of plans and organized programs all over the world and on top of that was the 20th Anniversary of AMA-Australia celebrations in 2021. But God had different plans for our people. We have left behind us an unprecedented year. What we faced last year - the pandemic, the Beirut explosions and the war in Artsakh - will pursue us for a very long time. But the most difficult was the Artsakh war and the hundreds of martyrs. And still today, a whole nation mourns its losses. But God has the answer for all the difficulties. Like the disciples when they were terrified on the boat, they called on Jesus to save them. Jesus

asked them and said: *"Where is your faith and why are you afraid?"* When the ceasefire happened, the AMAA was already conscious of its mission - to encourage the people and support the repopulation on their own land and to revive the programs of the AMAA in Artsakh. We praise God for AMA-Australia and celebrate its 20th anniversary. We are sure that together we will continue our mission for many more years, spreading the Good News everywhere and supporting the physical and spiritual restoration of our people."

The Church Choir presented two hymns and Rev. Youmshajekian gave the message of the day based on 2 Corinthians 9:7: *"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

Rev. Youmshajekian said that we frequently come across the theme of giving in the scriptures, and in the letter written to the church in Corinth, Paul not only stresses that giving is the holy obligation of every believer, but that God loves the cheerful giver. It is simple for us to look around and see the needs and give accordingly for the needs of the people, our brothers and sisters. We are invited to give for the work of God, but it must be with joy and thanksgiving. As such let us remember that God loves the cheerful giver.

After the service members of the congregation joined for morning tea in the adjacent hall.

We give thanks to God for being with us during the last 20 years, as we continue to serve and do the best we can to support our brothers and sisters who need our care and support. □



Zaven Khanjian and Dr. Nazareth Darakjian delivering their video messages.



* Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian is the President/CEO of the AMA-Australia.



AMAC's Compassionate Acts of Generosity

By Raffi Shnorhokian*

The spring season is beautiful. The snow has melted, the tulips are blooming and the days are getting longer and warmer, giving us renewed hope of better days ahead. But we cannot forget the past. The last 12 months have been difficult for our nation. We faced several major challenges: The Lebanese economic crisis, which was exacerbated by the explosions that rocked Beirut; the ominous escalation of COVID-19 cases and the ensuing health and economic problems; and worst of all, the third Artsakh war and the accompanying loss of land and the carnage of thousands of lost lives and wounded soldiers.

The Armenian Missionary Association of Canada (AMAC) community courageously rose to the occasion. The Board, members and volunteers responded to these crises and donated their time and efforts in compassionate acts of generosity.

Backpacks from Montreal

The backpack project started with an idea, turned into a mission and ended up

being a very successful project, thanks to the Armenian community of Montreal. Hundreds of families brought toys, school supplies and warm clothing to fill 1,100 backpacks. Dozens of volunteers worked around the clock to sort the gifts, put them in backpacks, package them in cartons and fill up the container which was parked in the First Armenian Evangelical Church parking lot. Some people who were not able to buy gifts provided monetary donations which allowed the organizing committee to make the purchases on their behalf. To fill the remaining space of the 40' container, ARDENE generously donated 450 boxes of new clothing.

These backpacks and items of clothing were recently distributed to the children and families of remote villages in Armenia and Artsakh including Kornidzor, Tegh, Karashen, Vorotan, Shurnukh and Bardz-ravan, putting a much-needed smile on their faces.

Clothing and Supplies from Toronto

When the Artsakh war started, the Armenian community of Toronto came together to fill up 2 containers with warm clothing, shoes, comforters, medical and other supplies. The first container arrived in Artsakh during the war and the supplies were distributed to the soldiers and their families. The second container recently arrived and the contents were distributed to families in Khnatsakh, Khozavar, Vaghatour and other neighbouring villages.

Minibuses

Two Mercedes-Benz Sprinter minibuses were also shipped from Toronto to Armenia, thanks to the generosity of Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Toronto and Armenian Canadian philanthropist Varoujan



Children in Artsakh are happy with the backpacks received, thanks to the Armenian Community of Montreal.

Lapoyan, and Raffi Tokmakjian, President of Tok Group.

One of the minibuses was allocated to the AMAA's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan and it is already in use. The second one is being used by the AMAA social workers for transportation between Yerevan and other cities in Armenia and Artsakh.

Besides these projects, the AMAC also organized many other fundraising activities both in Montreal and Toronto and contributed more than CAD\$120,000 for various programs in Armenia and Lebanon.

We want to thank everyone who partnered with us in this noble mission of helping our brothers and sisters around the world.

To learn more about the AMAC's mission and outreach programs, please visit www.amacnews.org. You can also follow us on Facebook [@amacnews.org](https://www.facebook.com/amacnews.org). □



Relief boxes packed in Toronto to be shipped to Artsakh.



Mercedes-Benz Minibus loaded with AMAC boxes arrives in Yerevan.



*** Raffi Shnorhokian** is the President/CEO of the AMAC.

Եղեռնի 106-ամեակ

Արթնութեան Ահազանգը

Չաւէն Խանճեան*

Այդպէս նախատեսուած չէր: Հայոց Ցեղասպանութեան 106րդ ոգեկոչման համագգային տրամադրութիւնը պէտք էր շարունակուէր ընդլայնուած համաշխարհային ճանաչումի բերկրանքով եւ դանդաղ՝ բայց ամրակուռ ուղիով մը՝ դէպի ճանաչում, վերականգնում եւ հատուցում:

Փոխարէնը, աննախադէպ տառապանքի տարի մը դիմագրաւեցինք, որու մտաբերումը կը փշաքաղէ ամէն Հայու հոգին երկրագունդի վրայ: Թագաժաիրը, տագնապներու անդադրում օղակը Սուրիոյ եւ Լիբանանի մէջ, Օգոստոսեան ահաւոր պայթումը Պէյրութի մէջ, խայթող յուշեր են որոնց մղձաւանջը երկար պիտի հետապնդէ մեզ:

Արցախեան պատերազմի աղէտալի արդիւնքը սակայն յեղաշրջեց բոլորը: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ Հայրենիքի համար զոհուած իր հազարաւոր զաւակները, որոնք անկախութեան համար սերունդներ իրենց կեանքը զոհած էին անցեալին: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ հազարաւոր սրտաբէկ մայրեր, հազիւ գարուն տեսնող որբեւայրի հարսեր որոնց տոհմածառերու սահմանաբակ աճը ապացոյցն են կացինահար ճիւղերու պատմութեան՝ զոհը նոյն ոճրագործին: Ազգ մը ամբողջ կ'ողբայ կորուստը հազարամեայ պապենական հողերու, որոնք վրայ ցանուած յուշարձաններու հոյլը՝ վկայութիւնն է անոր հարուստ քրիստոնէական ժառանգութեան:

Ազգային տրամադրութիւնը կարծես աւելի ներդաշնակ է 1921-ի, քան 2021-ի հետ:

Մռայլ, յուզիչ, ողբալի:

Բոլորս մեղաւոր ենք:

Մեղաւոր ենք, որովհետեւ մենք յղիացած յաղթանակներու տարփանքով չկրցանք խնամել եւ պահպանել մեր շահած օրինութիւնները:

Մեզ դիմագրաւող մարտահրաւերները լերնակուտակ են, մինչ քաղաքական եւ պետական ղեկավարութիւն մը կը պայքարի ապագայի հուն մը ճեղքել անհամար անորոշութիւններու ընդմէջ:

Արդարօրէն պատասխաններ կը փնտռուին երեսուն տարուայ անվտանգութեան, պաշտպանութեան եւ դիւանագիտական անփառունակ ձախողութիւններու համար: Խոր ցաւի, վիշտի եւ լուրջ մտահոգութեան մթնոլորտի մը մէջ, ժողովրդային եւ հասարակական միտքը Սփիւռքի եւ Հայաստանի մէջ կը ջանայ գիտակցիլ նոր իրավիճակի մը գոյութեան հետ, վերաչափել ապագայի ակնկալութիւնները եւ հունաւորել նոր ճանապարհ մը:

Աստուած ունի բոլոր դժուարութիւններու պատասխանը: Երբ աշակերտները տատանուող նաւուն վրայ սարսափած արթնցուցին Յիսուս զիրենք փրկելու համար, Ան ըսաւ «Թերահաւատներ, ինչո՞ւ այդպէս երկչոտ էք» Մատթէոս 8:26 «...ու մեծ հանդարտութիւն մը տիրեց:»

Պատմական Հայաստանի տարածքը հարազատ տուն է Քրիստոնէական եւ ազգային կոթողային հսկայ ժառանգութեան: Բայց հողը զուրկ է բռնութեամբ տեղահանուած եւ ոչնչացուած իր բնիկ ժողովուրդէն: Հողը անտարակոյս կը յուշէ տարածքին պատմութիւնը բայց ժողովուրդն է որ կը բնորոշէ անոր ինքնութիւնը: **Եթէ Քրիստոնէայ Հայաստանն ու Արցախը պիտի փրկուին հարկ է խտացնել անոր վրայ բնակող ժողովուրդի շարքերը:**

Յառաջիկայ տարիներուն մինչ պետութիւն եւ իշխանութիւն կը տքնին վերականգնել հայոց աշխարհն ու պետութիւնը, մենք հաւաքաբար պէտք է հաւատքով, վճռակամութեամբ եւ բարի կամեցողութեամբ սատարենք եւ օժանդակենք ժողովուրդի բարօրութեան, փարելով հողին, զարգացնելու եւ ծաղկեցնելու զայն՝ հետապնդելով ժողովուրդի երջանիկ ապրելու արդար իրաւունքը:

Մինչ կը շարունակենք հետապնդել ցեղասպանութեան արդարութիւնը, հարկ է առանց խոչընդոտի կամ հետաձգման

- զարգացնել ուժեղ, ժողովրդավարական և նորարարական Հայրենիք մը:
- ապահովել Արցախի ժողովուրդի ինքնորոշման իրաւունքը:
- ապահովել Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի հայ համայնքներու անվտանգութիւնն ու բարեկեցութիւնը

Լինել թէ չլինելու սպառնալիքները կը դիմագրաւեն մեզ, եւ եթէ չանսանք միասնութեան, զգոնութեան եւ անանձնական զոհաբերութեան կոչին, լուրջ կերպով վտանգուած պիտի ըլլանք գալ տարի 1922-ը դիմաւորելու փոխանակ 2022-ի:

Արթնութեան ահազանգը կը հնչէ:

Եկէք միասնաբար անսանք այդ կոչին:



* Չաւէն Խանճեան
Գործադիր Տնօրէն
Է Ամերիկայի Հայ
Աւետարանչական
Ընկերակցութեան:

Ապրիլ 24, 2021



Նկատի ունենալով Հայաստանյայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ 175ամեակի հետ ունեցաւ իր այժմեականութիւնը, ստորեւ կը ներկայացնենք մեջբերումներ, 3 Մարտ 2021-ին Երեւանի Պետական Համալսարանի Աստուածաբանութեան ֆակուլտետի Աճեմեան Գրադարանին մէջ կայացած Վեր. Յարութիւն Սելիմեանի «Դաւանական Նոր Իրավիճակը Եւ Ըմբռնումները՝ 19-րդ Դարու 40-50-ական թթ. Աւետարանական Մամուլի մէջ (Կ.Պոլիս, Չմիւռնիա)» Պատմական Գիտութիւններու թեկնածուի գիտական Աստիճանի Ատենախօսութեան Հրապարակային Պաշտպանութենէն

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին կը կազմակերպուի դաւանական հիմունքներու վրայ, որոնք են՝

- ա) Երրորդութիւնը միայն պաշտամունքի առարկայ պիտի ըլլայ:
- բ) Աւետարաններու ոգին եւ տառին հետ չեն համաձայնիր աճիւններու, խաչի եւ պատկերներու գործածութիւնը:
- գ) Մարդ ի բնէ մեղանշական է եւ Աստուծոյ վերածնիչ զօրութեան կարօտ: Բանին քարոզութիւնն է ամենէն ազդու միջոցը՝ որով այդ զօրութիւնը կրնայ հաղորդուի նշակային:
- դ) Աստուածաշունչը հաւատքի եւ կեանքի միակ առաջնորդն ու կանոնն է:
- ե) Քրիստոս է եկեղեցին միակ Գլուխը, Փրկիչը, Բարեխօսը եւ մեղաց քաւութեան միջոցը:
- զ) Փրկութիւնը հաւատքով կը գործուի եւ ոչ թէ բարի գործերով կամ ծոմապահութեամբ կամ ողորմութեամբ եւ կամ ապաշխարագինով:
- է) Սուրբ կեանք մը ապացոյց է փրկութեան:
- ը) Ճշմարիտ քրիստոնեաներու եւեւ խմբակցութիւն Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոսի եկեղեցին կը կազմէ:
- թ) Խորհուրդները երկուք են՝ Մկրտութիւն եւ Հաղորդութիւն: Սոյն աշխատութեան **գիտական գլխաւոր նորոյթը** այն է, որ բնութեան կ'առնուին Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ արդէն դաւանական հիմքի վրայ կազմուած բոլոր նախադրեալները, տիրող պայմանները եւ զանոնք յանգեցնող պատճառները ժամանակային ուղեծիրէն ներս:

Վեր. Սելիմեանի աշխատութեան համալիր ուսումնասիրութեամբ յանգեցուած են քանի մը կարեւոր եզրակացութիւններ.

1. 1840-1850-ական թուականները հայ ազգային ոգիի վերածնութեան տարիներ էին: Արեւմտահայ մշակութային կեդրոններու մէջ մտաւորականութիւնը փորձած է ժամանակի նոր գաղափարներով ուղղութիւն տալ ազգի հոգեւոր զարգացումին:
2. 1840-ական թթ. հիմնուեցան մշակութային-լուսաւորական, կրթական-բարեգործական ընկերութիւններ, վերելք ապրեցան գրատպութիւնն ու դպրոցը եւ հիմնուեցաւ դպրոցական թատրոն: 1840-ին ձեւաւորուեցաւ թրքահայ ազգային մամուլը:
3. 19-րդ դարու 30-40-ական թուականներու ընթացքին Օսմանեան կայսրութեան նկատմամբ Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Նահանգներու քաղաքականութիւնը եւ ամերիկեան միսիոնարական կազմակերպութիւններու գործունեութիւնը որոշակի դերակատարութիւն ունեցած են արեւմտահայութեան ճակատագրին վրայ:
4. Աւետարանական ազատականութիւնը բոլոր զգացումներէն վեր կը դասէ սերը:

5. Հայ աւետարանական քրիստոնեւորութեան մէջ գոյութիւն ունի ենթադրութիւն, թէ մարդ ի վիճակի է կատարել աւետարանական պահանջները: Իսկ դասական քրիստոնեւորութեան մէջ աւետարանական պահանջներու կատարումը մարդու հնարաւորութիւններու տեսանկիւնէն անելի բարդ խնդիր է: Սիրոյ պատուիրանը հակադրուած է մեղքին: Ըստ Եւթեան՝ անկաւ կ'օգնէ արթնցնելու մեղքի գիտակցումը:
6. Քաղաքակրթութեան ու քրիստոնեւորութեան յարաբերակցութեան հարցը ամենեւին Նոր չէ, քրիստոնեւորութեան հակասութիւնները այս ոլորտին մէջ մշտնջենական են եւ երեւան եկած են անոր գոյութեան ամբողջ ընթացքին:
7. Արեւելքի քրիստոնեաներուն եւ նոր քաղաքակրթութեան ներթափանցումին սպասողները հետաքրքրուած էին ոչ միայն արեւմտեան Քրիստոսով, զոր կարելի է առանձնացնել արեւմտեան հաւատէն, որ կեանքի համար նշանակութիւն ունի այլ մշակոյթներու մէջ:
8. Մշակոյթը «երկրորդական, արհեստական շրջակայ միջավայրն է», զոր մարդը կը դնէ առաջնային բնութեան վրայ: «Շտեմարան Պիտելեաց» պարբերականը հոգեւոր-կրօնական եզակի կազմակերպութիւն էր, որ հանգամանքներու բերումով ծառայութիւններ մատուցեց նաեւ «աշխարհիկ մշակոյթին»:
9. Մշակոյթը հոգեւոր կեանքի յարաբերութեամբ հանդէս կու գայ որպէս իւրացուած եւ առկա մտքի անհրաժեշտ ատաղծ, որպէս բովանդակութիւն: Մշակոյթը կարելի է դիտարկել, իբրեւ անհրաժեշտ բովանդակութիւն եւ միանգամայն մտածողութեան կազմաւորման եղանակ:
10. Աւետարանականները կտրուած չէին իրենց ժամանակէն եւ անմիջապէս կ'արձագանգէին դարաշրջանի առաջադրած թէ՛ հոգեւոր-բանասիրական, թէ՛ տնտեսական, թէ՛ բնագիտական, ի հարկին՝ քաղաքական հարցերուն: Պէտք է նշենք նաեւ, որ շատ ազգային գործիչներու անունները՝ Ռաֆայէլ Պատկանեան, Րաֆֆի եւ ուրիշներ, այդ ժամանակաշրջանին յաճախ կը հանդիպին «Աւետարներ եւ Շտեմարան Պիտելեաց»-ի էջերուն մէջ՝ երբեմն անոնցմէ կատարուող թարգմանութիւններով, երբեմն՝ գրական ընդհանուր տեսութիւններու մէջ:
11. 1840-1850-ական թուականներուն հայ ժողովուրդի քաղաքական ու տնտեսական զարգացումին հիմնահարցը առաջնահերթ նշանակութիւն ստացաւ:
12. Դաստիարակութիւնը հանդէսի ըմբռնումով առաջին կարգին կը նշանակէ կրթութիւն: Դաստիարակութիւնը ոչ միայն ազգային խնդիր է, այլեւ տնտեսական ու քաղաքական:
13. Ազգային կրթութեան խնդիրը յոյժ անհրաժեշտութիւն է եւ ապացոյցներու հարկ չունի: Ազգային կրթութիւն

ըսելով՝ «Աւետաբեր...» ը կ'ընկալէ ոչ միայն բուն իմաստով, այլ անոր համագային, համաժողովրդական, ժամանակակից հասկացութեամբ:

Ատենախօսութեան արժէքը նաեւ պայմանաւորուած է ո՛չ միայն բուն աւետարանական եկեղեցւոյ համապատասխան էջերու լուսաբանումով, այլեւ քանի մը զուգահեռ նոր երեւոյթներու սկզբնաւորման մասին տեղեկութիւններով:

Յատկապէս կ'արժէ նշել, որ 19-րդ դարու երկրորդ կեսի ընթացքին հայ հասարակական կեանքին մէջ գրաբարի եւ աշխարհաբարի կողմնակիցներու միջեւ գրապայքարը իր ակունքներով կը յանգի «Շտեմարան Պիտանի Գիտելեաց»ի գործունէութեան՝ փաստելով որ աշխարհաբարի եւ անոր հիման վրայ ստեղծուած նոր գրական հայերէնի ջատագովները աւետարանական են: □

Մտորումներ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի 175-ամեակին Առիթով

Տարին 1996: Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի կազմաւորման 150-ամեակ: Աշխարհ յարաբերաբար խաղաղ էր, ու Հայաստանի Հանրապետութիւնը կը տօնակատարէր իր անկախութեան 15-ամեակը: Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցին, իր բարեգործական թելով՝ Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեամբ գործօն ներկայութիւն էր Հայաստանի մէջ: Օրերուն մէջ, պատմութեան հոլովոյթի պայծառ դրսեւորումներէն մէկն էր քաղաքամայր Երեւանի մէջ Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցիի 150-ամեակի պաշտօնական հանդիսութիւնը, ու առանձնապէս յորելնական այդ հանդիսութեան արժանաւոր հիւրը՝ Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Ա.ը, որուն պայծառ խօսքը պատմական հաստատումն էր հայրենիքին մէջ Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցիի պաշտօնական, իրաւագոր ներկայութեան:



150-ամեակը յաղթանակի խաբկանք մը ստեղծեց: Ամէն ինչ անչա՛փ վարդագոյն պատկերացաւ: Պատկերացա՞ւ, թէ՛ ցանկատեսութիւնը շփոթուեցաւ իրողութեան հետ: Ինքնախաբէութիւնը հզօր զէնք է՝ նուաճումներ արձանագրած ըլլալու երազին մէջ ապրելու համար: Օրուան հմայքին պարզեւած ներշնչանքն էր, որ օրը՝ ձեռք բերուած անխափան, յարատեւ յաղթական ընթացքի պատրանքը ստեղծեց: Նոր երազներու, նոր մտասէւեռումներու մարտահրաւերային սպառնալիցումը անփութօրէն ծրարուեցաւ մէկդի: Միտքը արձակուրդ առաւ, եւ արտօսեց որ վաղը, ինքնակամ՝ Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցի-Հայ Աւետ. Համայնքի ճակատագիրը որոշէ: 150-ամեակին ո՞վ մտածեց 175-ամեակի մասին, ու ո՞վ հարց տուաւ թէ այդ ամեակին ինչ պիտի ըլլայ հաւատարմութեան ու ծառայութեան բազմիմէն ընծայուելիքին որակն ու քանակը: Այսօր, 175-ամեակի սեմին, ո՞վ քաջութիւնը ունի արժեչափելու վերջին բանիինգ տարիներուն ե՛ւ Հայաստանի, ե՛ւ Սփիւռքի մէջ Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցի-Հայ Աւետ. Համայնքի կատարած ընծայաբերումին որակն ու քանակը, որ նշանակէ՝

175-ամեակի սեմին կշռադատումն ու իրաւարժէք գնահատումը Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցի-Հայ Աւետ. Համայնքի ծառայութեան քաշն ու կշիռը ինքն իր հանդէպ, իր ազգին հանդէպ, իր եւ իր ազգին հարեւանութեան մէջ եղող հաւաքականութիւններուն հանդէպ:

175-ամեակը կը նուիրագործուի ի՞նչ նպատակի.

Քաղաքէ քաղաք շնչասպառ վազքով՝ ճառախեղդ յորելնական հանդիսութիւններ եւ

ինքներգութեան ու տիտղոսակիրներու ցուցահանդէ՞ս կազմակերպելու,

Առանց մոռնալու՝ շքեղագոյն պանդոկներու մէջ ցուցադրական ճաշկերոյթներու համար անհաշիւ մսխելը, թէ՛

175-ամեակը պիտի հռչակել ինքնաքննարկումի տարի, եւ առաջին հերթին պիտի ճշդել Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցի-Հայ Աւետ. Համայնքի կարողականութեան քաշն ու կշիռը, իմանալու, թէ՛ ճակատի վրայ, 21-րդ դարու մարտահրաւերներուն դէմ պայքարի քանի՞ օր տոկալու մարդումն ու զինամթերքը ունի ան. ու ապա առօրեայ սուտ ու իրաւ, յաճախ արուեստականօրէն ստեղծուած ձախաւեր տաղտուկները մէկդի դրած, գլուխներն ու ինքնասիրութիւնները պիտի խոնարհեցնել եւ ինքնամոռաց դիմել ինքնադատողութեան, սկզբունքային նպատակ ունենալով ախտորոշումը, նշտրակը ձեռքին վիրահատումը եւ բուժումը՝ հոգեւոր, մտաւոր, ֆիզիքական եւ սահմանադրական կառոյցի վարչա-կազմակերպչական ախտերուն, նուաճելի թիրախ ունենալով Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցիի կազմաւորման 200-ամեակի ճանապարհին՝ կառուցողական աշխատանքի ծրագիր մշակելը, հաւատքի ու մտքի տուները աւանդական հիմքերով բայց ժամանակակից ձգտումներով վերակենդանացնելը, աշխատանքին ձեռք զարնող եւ առաջ քշող մարդն ու մարդիկը պատրաստելը՝ նուիրումի եւ անսակարկ, նպատակասլաց ծառայութեան ոգի ներշնչելու, արժանին գնահատել սորվելու, որպէսզի կարելի ըլլայ 200-ամեակը բաց ճակատով եւ ատոք հունձքով դիմաւորել:

Յաղթանակներու երաշխիքը՝ պայքարի ու զոհողութեան ճանապարհին, երազներու իրականացումով կ'ապահովագրուի:

ԴՌԿՏ. ԵՐՈՒՄԱՆ Դ. ԶԱՍՈՒՆԻ

Վերանորոգում Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթել Եկեղեցիի Վերընծայման Պաշտամունք

«Հայր Աստուած, մեր հայրը, որ երկինքն ես, Տեր Յիսուս, Որդի Աստուծոյ, Փրկիչ աշխարհի, գլուխն եկեղեցիի, Հոգին Սուրբ Աստուած, մեր կենարար առաջնորդը, մխիթարիչը, սրբացնողը, Տերը եւ կեանք պարգեւողը, քեզի կը նուիրենք աղօթքի այս տունը»:

Նուիրման փոխասաց այս խօսքերով Կիրակի, 21 Մարտ 2021-ին, կեսօրուայ ժամը 12.00-ին հալեպահայ ժողովուրդը վերանորոգում Հայ Աւետ. Բեթել Եկեղեցին վերընծայեց Տերոջ:

ՀԵԸ-ի փողերախումբին նուագակցութեամբ հրաւիրեալները մուտք գործեցին դէպի եկեղեցի: Եկեղեցիէն ներս պաշտամունքի նախանուագը կատարեց Օրդ. Ռուզան Պարսումեան: Վերընծայման Պաշտամունքին իրենց ներկայութիւնը բերած էին Սուրիոյ հորհրդարանի երեսփոխաններ, Հալեպ Քաղաքի հորհուրդի նախագահը, Հալեպ Նահանգի նախագահը, Հալեպի մուֆթիի ներկայացուցիչ, փոխ-նստիկանապետը, Հալեպի հայ եւ քրիստոնէայ համայնքապետները, Սուրիական Չքօսաշրջիկութեան Գրասենեակի Պետը, Հալեպի Առետրական Գրասենեակի նախագահը, հալեպահայ կազմակերպութիւններու, միութիւններու, բարեսիրական հաստատութիւններու ներկայացուցիչներ, համայնքի ներկայացուցիչներ եւ հաւատացեալ ժողովուրդ:

Պաշտամունքին կոչը կատարեց Պատ. Սիմոն Տէր Սահակեան: Արաբերէնով աղօթք մատուց Հալեպի Արաբ Աւետ. Եկեղեցիի հովիւ՝ Վեր. Իպրահիմ Նսէյր: Ապա արաբերէնով բարի գալուստի խօսքը եւ օրուան խորհուրդը փոխանցեց Վեր. Դոկտ. Յարութիւն Սելիմեան:

Գեղարուեստական յայտագիրով իրենց մասնակցութիւնը բերին Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետարանական Միացեալ Երգչախումբը դաշնակի ընկերակցութեամբ Տիկ. Գայիանէ Սիմոնեան-Տերեանի:

Այնուհետեւ եկեղեցւոյ վերանորոգութեան հանգրուանները ներկայացնող տեսաերիզ մը ցուցադրուեցաւ:

Պաշտամունքին միասնաբար արտասանուեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու Հաւատոյ Հանգանակը:

Աստուածաշունչի (Ա. Կորնթ. 3.10-17, Մատթ. 7.21-27) համարներէն հայերէնով ընթերցեց Տիար Ծանթ Ակիշեան, իսկ արաբերէնով՝ Վեր. Պշարա Մուսա Օղի:

Վերանորոգում Հայ Աւետ. Բեթել Եկեղեցին նուիրման փոխասաց ընթերցանութենէն եւ Պատ. Սիմոն Տէր Սահակեանի աղօթքէն ետք Վեր. Դոկտ. Յարութիւն Սելիմեան հանգամանօրէն կատարեց վերընծայման յայտարարութիւնը:

Դասական եւ հայկական երաժշտութենէն կտորներ նուագեց Լարային հնգեակը, կատարողութեամբ՝ Դաւիթ Մելքոնեանի, Մասիս Արսլանեանի, Ծահէ Աւագեանի (Ա. Ձութակ), Սարգիս Աւագեանի (Բ. Ձութակ) եւ Կարօ Արսլանեանի (Թաւ Ձութակ):

Վերընծայման Պաշտամունքին Աստուծոյ խօսքին պատգամը փոխանցեց Սուրիոյ Հայ Աւետ. Համայնքի



Պետ Վեր. Դոկտ. Յարութիւն Սելիմեան: Վերապատուելիս հիմնուելով Աստուածաշունչի (Ա. Կորնթ. 3.10-17, Մատթ. 7.21-27) համարներուն ըսաւ. «Փորձորիկները տեսակաւոր են կեանքի բոլոր ժամանակներուն եւ եղանակներուն մէջ: Ինչպէ՞ս դիմակայել զանոնք: Սոյն ճշմարտութիւնը կախեալ է, մեր յարաբերութիւններէն, հասկացողութիւններէն, համոզումներէն ու ըմբռնումներէն, աշխատանքի ոճէն ու մտածելակերպէն, թէ ի՞նչ հիմքու վրայ կառուցած ենք՝ ժայռի վրայ կամ ավազի վրայ»: Ապա ան անելցուց. «Եկեղեցիի շինութիւնը կեանքի շինութիւն է: Կեանքի կառուցումը շարունակական գործընթաց է:

Վեր. Եռուսէ Գապար ընթերցեց Սուրիոյ Արտաքին Գործոց Նախարարութեան փոխանորդ Դոկտ. Պաշար Գապարիին ուղարկած շնորհաւորական գիրը: Եկեղեցւոյ վերընծայման ուրախ առիթով շնորհաւորագրեր ուղարկուեցան Մ.Ա.Հ.Ա.Ե.Միութեան նախագահ՝ Վեր. Մկրտիչ Գարակէօզեանէն, Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան Գործադիր Տնօրէն՝ Տիար Զաւէն Խանճեանէն, Հայ Աւետ. Համաշխարհային հորհուրդի Գործադիր Տնօրէն՝ Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Թութիկեանէն, Պէյրութի Հայկազեան Համալսարանի նախագահ՝ Վեր. Դոկտ. Փօլ Հայտօսթեանէն եւ այլ միջազգային ու եկեղեցական կազմակերպութիւններէ:

Ներկաները ունկնդրեցին հեռաւոր Հոլլանտայէն (Առցանց) Արմանի Հերա Սելիմեանի մեկնաբանած «Տերունական Աղօթք»-ը, հեղինակ՝ Albert Hay Malotte, մշակում եւ նուագակցութիւն՝ Տիկ. Ծողակաթ Աբարդեան-Սելիմեանի:

Հայ Աւետ. Բեթել Եկեղեցւոյ Վերընծայման Պաշտամունքը իր աւարտին հասաւ հայ երեք համայնքապետներու առաքելական օրհնութեան աղօթքներով:

Յետ պաշտամունքին հրաւիրեալները ուղղուեցան «Շիրաճեան» սրահ, ուր հատեցին աւուր պատշաճի կարկանդակ եւ ապա տեղի ունեցաւ կոկիկ հիւրասիրութիւն:

Լուսին Ապաճեան-Չիլաքօշեան

Յուշամատենան Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակի առթիւ

Գրախօսեց՝ Չաւեն Խանճեան

«Նա զարմացաւ: Այդ ինչ պարզ, այդ ինչ անշուք եկեղեցի էր: Ո՛չ բեմ, ո՛չ սեղան, ո՛չ զարդարած տաճար, ո՛չ ոսկեգօծ պատկերներ, ո՛չ արծաթեայ խաչեր եւ ո՛չ թանկագին զգեստներ չկային այնտեղ:Ժողովուրդը Նստած էր երկայն նստարանների վրայ այդ եւ կին միասին, իւրաքանչիւրը ուներ ձեռքին մի փոքրիկ երգարան:Նա (Քահանան) իր հագուստով չէր զանազանում հասարակ ժողովուրդից: Նրա քարոզը այնքան պարզ, այնքան հասկնալի էր, որ բոլորը հասկանում էր Վարդանը:»

Վարդանի երազը: ԲԱՖՖԻ 'Խենթը', էջ 305
«Սովետական Գրող» Հրատարակչություն, Երեւան 1978

Վարդանի երազի հետեւողականութեամբ, Քրիստոս Յիսուս ունենալով եկեղեցւոյ գլուխը եւ Աստուծոյ շնորհքը՝ փրկութեան երաշխիք, ամենահամեստ պայմաններու տակ 1846-ին ծնունդ առաւ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին: Խղճի ազատութիւնը վահան ըրած եւ իրենց Աստուածատուր պատկանելիութեան ամուր փարած, քառասուն հիմնադիրները հաստատեցին «Մենք ակնածանքով կ'ընդունինք մեր ազգային աւանդութիւնները, սրբագործուած մեր մարտիրոսներու արիւնով: Մենք կը սիրենք մեր հայ ազգը սրտանց եւ ամբողջ մտքով: Բայց ամեն բանէ աւելի թանկագին կը նկատենք խղճի ազատութիւնը, եւ թոյլ պիտի չտանք որ ոչ մէկ իշխանութիւն, կամ աւանդութիւն, կամ հրաման մեր ձեռքէն առնէ Քրիստոսի Աւետարանը:»

Յուլիս 1, 2021ը, 175ամեակն է Հայաստանյայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ – (ՀԱԵ)-ի ծնունդին: Հոկտեմբեր 2019ին Հայ Աւետարանական Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդը – (ՀԱՀԽ) որոշեց այդ տարեդարձը տօնել հանդիսաւոր շուքով Մայր Հայրենիքի մէջ Յունիս-Յուլիս 2021ին: Յատուկ յանձնախումբ մը գործի լծուեցաւ մշակելով բազմաթիւ ծրագիրներ որոնք ընդհանրապէս զոհ գացին 2020Էն իվեր երկրագունդը գրոհող թագաժահիրին: Շնորհիւ Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Թութիկեանի ժրաջան եւ հետեւողական աշխատանքին, թագաժահիրի մանգաղէն փրկուեցաւ սակայն յիշատակելի տարեդարձին Նուիրուած՝ այս շքեղ եւ բովանդակալից Յուշամատենը: Յուշամատենան Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ, 175-ամեակի Տարեդարձին առթիւ:

Հայաստանյայց Աւետարանական եկեղեցւոյ պատմութեան եւ զարգացումին Նուիրուած հատորները ստուար են: Անոնցմէ անդրանկը կը պատկանի Վեր. Հ. Ստեփան Իւթիւնեանի «Ծագումն ու Ընթացքը Հայ Աւետարանականութեան Ի Հայս», Կ. Պոլիս 1914: Եկեղեցւոյ ամբողջական թէ մասնակի պատմութեան Նուիրուած յաջորդող հատորները ժամանակագրական կարգով եղած են,

Վեր. Եղիա Ս. Քասունիի «Լուսաշաւիղ»ը, «Պատմութիւն Հայ Աւետարանական Շարժման», Պէյրութ, 1947

Վեր. Տիգրան Ե. Խրլոբեանի երկհատոր «Ոսկեմատենան» Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի Հայ Աւետ. Միութեան, Նուիրուած՝ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ Հաստատութեան Ա. Հարիւրամեակի, Պէյրութ, 1950 եւ 1951:

Վեր. Կարապետ Պ. Ատանալեանի «ՅՈՒՇԱՐԶԱԼ»՝ Հայ Աւետարանակալ եւ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ: Ֆրեզնո, ԱՄՆ 1952: Աւելի Նեղ բովանդակութեամբ հատորներ հրատարակած են Նաեւ Վեր. Ա.Ա. Պետիկեան, Վեր. Կ.Յ. Չոփուրեան, Վեր. Յ.Փ. Ահարոնեան, Վեր. Վահան Թութիկեան, Վեր. Պ. Տարագճեան եւ ուրիշներ:

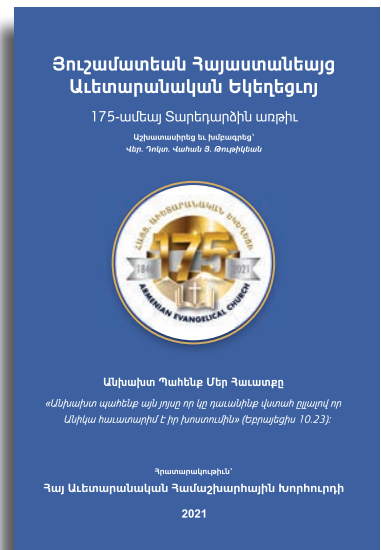
Պատմութեան եւ մանաւանդ Եկեղեցական պատմութեան երկասիրութիւնը գուցէ հասարակաց ընթերցման ծառայող առարկայ չէ: Պատմութեան արձանագրութիւնը կը ծառայէ սերունդէ սերունդ ժառանգութեան փոխանցման գանձանակը դառնալու: Ան շտեմարանն է ժամանակի գիտական մտածողութեան եւ արդիւնաբերութեան, պատրաստ գոհացնելու պրպտող, ուսումնասիրող եւ սերտող մտաւորականի, բանասերի կամ գիտնականի ծարաւը: Առ այդ, պատմութիւնը պէտք է պահպանուի, արձանագրուի եւ հրատարակուի:

Ժամանակակից Հայ Աւետարանական պատմութեան մէջ պատմական, բանասիրական, մշակութային, հոգեւոր եւ հրապարագրական անդաստաններու մէջ իրենց յուռիք եւ արգասաբեր աշխատանքի եւ արտադրութեան մէջ յատուկ տեղ կը գրաւեն Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Թութիկեանը եւ Փրոֆ. Դոկտ. Երուանդ Քասունին: Անոնց ստեղծագործական ժառանգութիւնը անջնջելի դրոշմ մը ձգած է Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ պատմութեան, հայոց պատմութեան, մշակոյթին, մամուլին, յափշտակուած հայրենիքի մը դատին եւ մարդկային վեհ արժէքներու Նուիրուած հրատարակութիւններուն մէջ:

Նշանակալից է որ այս երկու Նուիրեալները իրենց ստեղծագործական գործը կատարած են մասնագիտական որակով եւ սակայն սիրողի տրամադրութեամբ:

Ահա անոնցմէ մէկն է զոր կը քանանք ընթերցողին ներկայացնել այսօր:

Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Թութիկեան իր աշխատասիրած եւ խմբագրած «Յուշամատենան Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական



Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեայ Տարեդարձին առթիւ» հատորի յառաջաբանին մէջ կ'ըսէ. «...այս գիրքը մասնագիտական գործ մը չէ եւ ոչ ալ քննական պատմութիւնը Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին այլ ընդհանուր համայնապատկերը սեղմ գիծերով ներկայացուած»: Ես քիչ մը աւելի առատաձեռն ըլլալով, այս աշխատասիրութիւնը պիտի որակեմ «Փոքրիկ Համայնագիտարան» մը ժամանակակից Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ եւ «Աւետարանականաց», ինչպէս պիտի սիրեր ըսել Վեր. Կարապետ Ատանայեանը:

Արդարեւ, Երկու հարիւր ութը Էջերու մէջ ամփոփուած այս հատորը, տպուած փայլուն, որակաւոր թուղթի վրայ Երեւանի մէջ, հրատարակութիւնն է Հայ Աւետարանական Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդի, որու Գործադիր Տնօրէնն է Վեր. Թութիկեան 2003 թուականէն ի վեր: Յուշամատենի բովանդակութիւնը բաժնուած է չորս մասերու:

Առաջին մասով՝ Վեր. Թութիկեան համառօտ կերպով կը ներկայացնէ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ ծագումը, հոլովոյթը, խորհուրդը, դաւանութիւնն ու վարդապետութիւնը եւ վերջապէս Եկեղեցւոյ ներդրումներն ու ծառայութիւնները ազգին:

Երկրորդ մասը կը պարփակէ Քրիստոսի Աւետարանը եւ փրկութեան բարի լուրը բաժնելու եւ տարածելու ծառայութեան դաշտին մէջ կենդանի շունչով գործող ժամանակակից հինգ Հայ Աւետարանական Միութիւններու, Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան եւ Ստեփան Փիլիպոսեան Հիմնարկի հակիրճ պատմականը եւ անոնց ծառայութեան դաշտի նկարագրականը: Սոյն Էջերու հեղինակներն են ՀԱՀԽ-ի անդամ միութիւններու եւ կազմակերպութիւններու կողմէ նշանակուած անձեր:

Հատորի երրորդ մասը կը պարփակէ 22 շնորհաւորական նամակներ եկեղեցական եւ աշխարհական ղեկավարներու կողմէ: Եւ վերջապէս չորրորդ մասով կը վկայուին ՀԱԵ հիմնադիր քառասուն անդամները, Եկեղեցւոյ ճանաչման կայսերական հրովարտակը եւ հարիւրամեակի նուիրուած օրհներգը:

Յուշամատենի գունագեղ շապիկի ճակատին կը հանգչի 175-ամեակի յատուկ խորհրդանիշը՝ զոր ստեղծագործութիւնն ու նուէրն է ճարտար եւ բարձր ճաշակի տէր՝ արուեստագետ Մայք Նահապետի:

Հաւատարիմ մնալով 301 թուականէն սկսեալ Ամենակալ Աստուծոյ հետ հայ ժողովուրդի կնքած ուխտին, հատորի ճակատին կը կարդանք 175-ամեակի յանձնախումբի ընտրած բնաբանը՝ «Անխախտ Պահենք Մեր Հաւատքը» հետեւելով Եբրայեցիս 10. 23 ոսկեղէն համարին՝ «Անխախտ պահենք այն յոյսը որ կը դաւանինք, վստահ ըլլալով որ Անիկա հաւատարիմ է Իր խոստումին»

Յուշամատենի հատորը արժանապէս ձօնուած է ՀԱԵ բոլոր այն անդամներուն որոնք հաւատքը «անխախտ պահած են անցեալին, անխախտ կը պահեն ներկայիս եւ անխախտ պիտի պահեն ապագային»:

Յուշամատենը որպէս «Փոքրիկ Համայնագիտարան» Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ պատմութեան, ներկայիս, դաւանանքին եւ վարդապետութեան, մատչելի է բոլոր անոնց՝ որոնք ունին այդ գիտութեան ծանօթանալու փափաքն ու հետաքրքրութիւնը:

Օրինակ մը ձեռք բերելու համար կարելի է դիմել Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան Գրասենեակներուն: Հայաստանի Մասնաճիւղ՝ Մարշալ Բաղդամեան, 18 Երեւան, Հայաստան կամ Կեդրոնատեղի - 31 West Century Road, Paramus, New Jersey, 07652 USA.

Երազներ կան որոնք ժամանակի պարտադրանքի տակ իրական կեանքի հետ առնչուած պահանջք եւ ակնկալիք են: Երազներ կան որոնք կ'իրականան: □

"The Angel of Aleppo" Lands in America

Who are the heroes in Armenian history? Which real-life heroes do we teach our children about? The illustrated children's book, *The Angel of Aleppo*, is one such attempt to answer these questions.

Published by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the story is about Rev. Hovhannes Eskijian, who risked his life to save children during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Ironically, his granddaughter, Rev. Nancy Eskijian, followed in his footsteps and is a minister in Los Angeles, CA.

The story begins with Rev. Eskijian's childhood, when he and his brother escaped death by hiding in a ditch. Unfortunately, his parents were not so fortunate, and the boys became orphans. When Hovhannes grew up, he became a minister and moved to Aleppo, Syria with his wife. There, they witnessed Armenian deportees arriving by train from the interior provinces of Turkey. Aleppo served as a stopping point before the deportees continued their journey to the desert of Der Zor, which meant certain death.

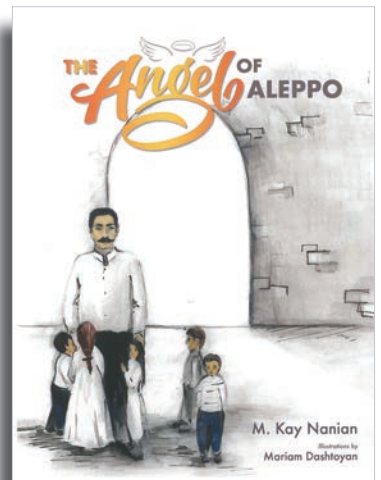
Scan here to
order the book



Rev. Eskijian decided to smuggle children from the train and hide them within the city. His bravery saved countless children before he succumbed to the disease of typhus.

The book is written by M. Kay Nanian, a judge in Phoenix, AZ and is illustrated by an art student in Armenia, Mariam Dashtoyan.

The book is available for \$10.00 plus S&H at the AMAA website: www.amaa.org, or by calling the AMAA (201) 265-2607. Nancy Rivera will be glad to process your order, so we can educate a new generation of children about the heroic efforts of one of our own. □



Dr. Matthew Movsesian Bequest Gifts AMAA \$800,000 for Mission & Service

Caring, lover of music and comedy, authentic, brave, unique, intelligent, honest, achiever and successful are just a few of the many words used to describe Dr. Matthew Movsesian who passed away from cancer April 12, 2020 in Salt Lake City, UT.

A generous gift of \$800,000 left by Dr. Movsesian to the Armenian Missionary Association of America in his will was gratefully acknowledged by the AMAA on December 23, 2020. The assets from this gift to the AMAA's General Endowment Fund will be designated as the Matthew A. Movsesian Memorial Fund and expended for AMAA Mission & Service.

Matty, as he preferred to be called by his family and friends, was born and raised in Forest Hills, a neighborhood of Queens, New York City, NY, in 1954. He graduated with honors from Columbia University and later Harvard Medical School. He went on to have a successful career as a research cardiologist with positions at Northwestern University, the National Institutes of Health, the University of California-San Francisco, and ultimately the University of Utah. For three decades, Dr. Movsesian was a valued faculty member in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine and at the VA Salt Lake City Medical Center, where he served as Director of Outpatient Cardiology for many years.

His research focused on the treatment of heart failure, specifically cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases and their role in regulating intracellular signaling in normal and diseased hearts. He also started a company called Sirdus – Armenian for "My Heart" – to develop heart failure drugs.

His brother Mark Movsesian, a prominent scholar and attorney, wrote a moving eulogy on his brother for a small burial service held in Salt Lake City in April 2020. He wrote that his brother, who



believed in treating others fairly and with dignity, was a wonderful doctor and was a favorite of his patients at the VA Salt Lake City Medical Center. He loved to tell jokes and perform music and was a good friend to many. Mark said that he also loved The Book of Common Prayer, praying from it every day. A memorial service will be held at a later date due to the restrictions of COVID-19.

"The AMAA is truly blessed to receive this very generous gift from Dr. Movsesian," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "His amazing life, contributions to the field of cardiology and his commitment to saving others will be felt for many, many years. His gift to the AMAA will be used to help us continue our Mission of helping our brothers and sisters throughout the world."

By **Jane Wenning**, AMAA Staff

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

Chahin Movses Chahbazian, MD
Fallbrook, CA

* Mike Broukian
Los Angeles, CA

Mushegh Guevjehizian
Fresno, CA

Haig Kassouni
Grand Rapids, MI

* Henry Keledjian
Fresno, CA

Dr. Y. Leon Maksoudian
San Luis Obispo, CA

Suren Maserejian
Belmont, MA

Jack Sheen, M.D.
Santa Barbara, CA

Peruz Guevjehizian Tcherchian
Los Angeles, CA

* *Memorial donations designated for AMAA*

IN MEMORIAM:

Hirair Hovnanian

With deep sorrow the AMAA learned of the passing of Armenian-American Philanthropist Hirair Hovnanian on April 9, 2021, at age 91. A visionary leader and a caring individual, Mr. Hovnanian was the founder, benefactor and Director of many charities and organizations, such as the Armenian Assembly of America and Hayastan All Armenian Fund Board of Trustees.

Mr. Hovnanian was born in 1930 in Kirkuk, Iraq. He came to the United States in 1951 and after graduating from Villanova University with a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, he established one of the most successful privately owned land and housing development companies in the country.

The Hovnanian Foundation has supported a variety of civic, charitable, educational and philanthropic causes including Armenian Evangelical educational ministries such as Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

"Hirair Hovnanian revered his roots and made countless contributions to his people in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora. His philanthropy is deeply and widely entrenched and his legacy will ever shine in the history of modern Armenia. We are heartbroken for the loss but we stand up with reverence, respect and admiration to celebrate an exemplary iconic life that has become a beacon of light, hope and love," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.

His wife Anna passed away in 2018. They leave behind five children: Siran, Edele, Armen, Tanya and Leela, two sons-in-law, Toros and Levon, and five grandchildren.

Hirair Hovnanian's funeral service was held in Yerevan on April 10. □



Vartan Gregorian, Ph.D.

Philanthropist Vartan Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation of New York and Co-Founder of "Aurora" Global Humanitarian Award, passed away April 15, 2021. He was 87.

Born in Tabriz, Iran in 1934, Dr. Gregorian moved to the United States in 1956 to attend Stanford University, where he majored in history and the humanities. He graduated in 1958 with honors and was awarded a Ph.D. in 1964.

In 1972 Gregorian joined the University of Pennsylvania faculty as Tarzian Professor of History and in 1977 became the 23rd Provost of the University serving until 1981. From 1981–1989 he served as President of New York Public Library reviving the second largest library in the country. In 1989, he assumed the presidency of Brown University and since 1997 served as the 12th President of Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In 1998, Vartan Gregorian was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Bill Clinton, and in 2004 the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George Bush, the highest civilian award of the United States.

On October 23, 2019, Gregorian visited the AMAA's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan, accompanied by the School's Benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian. After giving a brief overview of his respectable scientific and public path in the past, he answered the diverse questions of the students and spoke about his views on school, education, philanthropy and volunteering. At the conclusion of his remarks he said: "You owe it to yourself to make Armenia become the strongest country in education, banking, new technologies, medical and other priority areas... and remember that the future of the Armenian people is in your hands."

Vartan Gregorian is survived by three sons, including NBC News reporter Dareh Gregorian.

"We are saddened by the loss of yet another outstanding human being," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "But we take heart in the fact that the field is full of sprouts irrigated by the likes of Vartan Gregorian who will come to carry the torch. We salute the countless invaluable contributions of Vartan Gregorian, both to his roots and his adopted Homeland. We bow to his memory as we celebrate his life." □



Vartan Gregorian at AMAA's Avedisian School with School Benefactors Pamela and Edward Avedisian.



IN MEMORIAM:

Charles Haig DeMirjian



Charles Haig DeMirjian, a former Board member of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and life-long supporter, passed away at home, peacefully, in the presence of his family, on March 8, 2021. He was 95. And, he was thrilled by the birth of his first great-grandchild, Weston, son of Jenika and Kyle, in 2020.

Charles was born August 20, 1925, to Minas Garabed Demirjian (b. 1876, Gemerek) and Keghany Yardumian Demirjian (b. 1887, Yozghat). He was the youngest of seven children and the only one born in the United States (Philadelphia). Minas and Keghany emigrated to the United States in 1923. They were

both survivors of the Armenian Genocide during which they lost their first spouses, and Minas's five children. As children, Sara (Sirouhy) Demirjian Benglian, Florence (Dzaghouhy) Demirjian Brown, and Charles were of constant assistance to their parents, helping them to navigate American culture, by language translation, negotiation with customers at their father's shoe repair shop, and delivering their mother's embroidery work to neighborhood clients.

Charles graduated from West Philadelphia High School in 1943, having completed an engineering preparatory curriculum. On his 18th birthday he enlisted in the armed services and served with the U.S. Marine Corps from January 1944 – May 1946.

Upon returning home to Philadelphia, Charles completed his higher education and studied the fine and industrial arts at the University of the Arts (Philadelphia) for three years, then rounded out his education with a fourth year of study at the Price School of Advertising & Journalism (Philadelphia).

In 1950, he began to court Diane Zobian, a fellow church member and the daughter of Joseph and Grace Zobian. Charles and Diane shared the desire to have children, maintain close-knit family relationships, and passion for art, music and literature. They married in May 1952.

Charles was an engaged father to his children. He made the time to read to them, help with their schoolwork, and was always on the lookout for an opportunity to play with them. He, together with Diane, was a stern disciplinarian who taught his children proper manners, the importance of gracious communication, and respect for others.

A dedicated husband, Charles was always attentive to Diane's needs and passionate about experiencing concerts, lectures and art exhibitions with Diane. Together, they took immense joy in entertaining family and friends in their home.

Charles had a stimulating, valuable, and awarded professional career as a strategic marketing, advertising and creative director. As a young man, his portfolio of advertising copy and commercial art landed him his first position with Sun Ray Drug in 1950. In July 1954 Charles joined E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company in Wilmington, DE, where he stayed for 37 years, increasing and expanding his role as the company evolved. He was the recipient of international awards for advertising effectiveness and design excellence, including three CLIO Awards.

In the 1990s, after retiring from DuPont, Charles established The Charles DeMirjian Collection at the Hagley Museum in Wilmington. It is a personal collection, gathered over the years, of DuPont artifacts including packaging, photographs, marketing collateral, and ephemera dating from pre-WWI through 1980.

Charles was an instrumental member of the Armenian community, at the core of which was his life-long membership of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church (AMCC) of Havertown, PA. He was always mindful of, and in his prayers and teachings to his children, paid tribute to the amazing fortitude, faith and endurance of the Armenians who, despite the grief and loss experienced in Turkey, picked up and forged their way to the United States to remake lives of faith, love and community.

Charles's Armenian community participation included life-time support of the projects and objectives of the AMAA, serving as Board member seven times. He was also a Board and Committee member of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), serving as associate editor of the Forum Quarterly from 2000-2004. In 1976, Charles helped plan and execute "The Armenian American Community Celebrates the American Bicentennial," writing copy for the banquet program, and copy for the commemorative plaque that labels the statue of "Meher," sculpted by Khoren Der Harootian and presented to the city of Philadelphia, with a permanent home on the grounds of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The collaborative relationships established through his endeavors with his cherished Church family, as well as those made through the AMAA and AEUNA, enriched his life and the life of his family, to invaluable levels. Charles will be sorely missed by family, friends and community. He is survived by his beloved wife and best friend Diane Zobian DeMirjian; children Susan (Ron Anteroine), Timothy (Jacquelyn Devedjian DeMirjian), Michael; and sister Florence Demirjian Brown. Charles, "2-Pop Chuck," as the proud and playful grandfather of Jenika (Kyle Gardner), Derek, Caprice, and Brielle DeMirjian.

According to his wishes, Charles's body has been donated to the Human Gifts Registry. Donations may be sent to AMCC or AMAA. A memorial service to celebrate Charles's life will be held at a later date when all can gather safely together.

By Susan DeMirjian

On behalf of Diane, Timothy, Jacquelyn, and Michael



IN MEMORIAM: Set Charles Momjian



Set Charles Momjian, 91, of Huntingdon Valley, PA, advisor to presidents and well-known antiques collector, died on April 12, 2021 after a long illness.

Set was born in Atlantic City on April 9, 1930 to Charles and Julia Momjian, both refugees who were orphaned after the Armenian Genocide and raised by American missionaries. The family, which included younger brother Albert, overcame many challenges during the Depression, especially after Charles died at an early age. He attended Atlantic City High School, LaSalle College, and Charles Morris Price School of Advertising. He then joined the Army, and, after hearing that the platoon photographer

would have his own private quarters, spent a weekend learning all he could about photography. Returning to Atlantic City, he used this skill as the official photographer for the Miss America pageant.

He began and ended his long professional career at Ford Motor Company, including years as a marketing executive at Philco-Ford, Ford Aerospace and, ultimately, as a Washington liaison for the company.

Mr. Momjian is best known and remembered for his dual passions of antique collecting and politics. As a young boy, a serendipitous find of an old gun under the Atlantic City boardwalk inspired his lifelong love of antiques. During a 1987 interview on the Today Show about his collecting, he said, "collecting is in the marrow of my bones." His son Chris said that his father "spent every free minute he had digging through stalls at flea markets, talking with dealers at antique shows or attending auctions. I'd go along with him, leaving before dawn; my 'reward' at the end of the long day was usually an antique pocket knife for my collection."

Early in his collecting career, following advice from the Grolier Club, he pursued first edition books. His obsession, however, quickly expanded into other areas. He assembled an Americana collection that spanned genres, from soda fountain fixtures and coin-op machines, to rare historical manuscripts and early photography. He is nationally known for his collection of White House and presidential china and he was in demand as a speaker to many groups throughout the country. Today, many objects from his collections are on loan to numerous museums and historic sites, including to presidential libraries.

A chance encounter with Jimmy Carter during his presidential campaign led to decades of service and advice to presidential campaigns and presidents from both political parties. Mr. Momjian served the Carter Campaign as Director of Special Projects. Merging his passion for art and politics, he worked with modern artists including Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, commissioning artwork to be sold to raise funds for the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Through the sale of the Inaugural Impressions portfolio, funds were raised to keep the Washington, D.C. museums open late for visitors to the nation's capital. Following the election, President Carter nominated Mr. Momjian as a U.S. Representative to the United Nations with the rank of ambassador, the first person of Armenian descent to hold the position. He later served as a delegate to the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva and chairman of the DNC's Ethnic-American Committee.

He supervised presidential gifts to heads of state, often combining a special printing of a presidential speech presented in a fine binding. He had miniature Liberty Bells cast from an old chip, which came from the crack in the original bell. He presented one to the Queen of England when she visited Independence National Historical Park during America's Bicentennial.

In 1981, President Reagan nominated Mr. Momjian as the only non-Jewish member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. During the terms of George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, he continued to work on special projects for both presidents, the preservation of the collections at the White House, and the restoration of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Mr. Momjian was equally passionate about his Armenian roots and was committed to the Armenian-American community, holding leadership positions with the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Assembly, the Armenian Sisters Academy in suburban Philadelphia, and the Knights of Vartan. In 1976, during this country's Bicentennial, he recognized America's generosity to the Armenian community by raising \$1 million in a Thank You, America event on Ellis Island, in order to buy a set of tapestries designed by Christian Herter, celebrating significant events in American history. Originally owned by the Armenian Sisters Academy, the tapestries were purchased from them and then donated to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also, in 1976, the Knights of Vartan commissioned Khoren der Harootian to create a statue of the legendary Armenian figure, Young Meher. Mr. Momjian influenced city officials to place the statue on valuable property alongside Philadelphia's Museum of Art. In 1983, the Ghazir Armenian orphan rug, which had been presented in 1925 to President Calvin Coolidge with gratitude to the American people, was returned to the White House. Mr. Momjian advocated for the permanent display of the rug.

Over the years Mr. Momjian served on many non-profit boards, among them the Ellis Island Restoration Commission, the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, the African-American Museum, the National Holocaust Museum, the International League for Human Rights, the Liberty Museum, the First Ladies' Library, the Capitol Children's Museum, the Brandywine Museum, and the National Symphony Orchestra. He was a member of the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Poor Richard Club, the Union League of Philadelphia, and the Huntingdon Valley Country Club.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Joan (Reed); sons Bruce (Christine) and Christopher (Gail); and six grandchildren. His brother, Albert, predeceased him. Funeral arrangements were private. Memorial contributions may be made to the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, Havertown, PA, or to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Paramus, NJ. □

Berj A. Gueyikian, M.D.

Dr. Berj A. Gueyikian of Chicago, IL passed away after a long hospitalization on February 16, 2021 at the age of 85.

Berj was born in Beirut, Lebanon on February 16, 1936 to Abraham and Matilde Gueyikian who both preceded him in death. Berj was the older brother to Luther (Ida) and the late Vartouhy (the late Ara) Artinian. Berj attended the Gertmenian Elementary School in Nor Hadjen, Lebanon and the Armenian Evangelical Central High School in Ashrafieh, graduating with high honors.

As an undergraduate at the American University of Beirut, he was the Chairman of Zavarian, a cultural college student society. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree, he continued his studies and achieved his MD degree in 1963.

After marrying Karoun Oflazian in July 1964, they moved to Saudi Arabia, where he worked for Tapline as their in-house physician, during which time they had three children, Alice, Houry and Ara (Maree) before moving to the United States in 1968. The young Gueyikian family arrived in Chicago on July 4, 1968 and immediately were welcomed by members of the Armenian Congregational Church of Chicago. Berj and Karoun had their fourth child, Sebouh (Sara) shortly after Berj opened his medical practice in Chicago, where he served the local community for over 30 years.

His commitment to the Church continued to stay strong as he served as the Joint Board Chairman under the leadership of Rev. Garabed Tilkian and, later, Rev. Barkev Darakjian.

Berj was an active leader and member of the Chicago Medical Society-westside chapter, Chicago "Christapor" ARF, Hamazkayin, and Union of Marash. He was a founding member of the Armenian Community Center in Glenview, IL.

He worked hard, believed in doing good work, focused on providing for his family, and loved each family member (especially his eight grandchildren Arman, Daniel, Ani, Raffi, Gabriel, Sofie, Gabriella and Margaret) deeply.

Berj did find comfort in God and Church while hospitalized, asking Karoun to sing hymns or read from the Bible.

The funeral services were held privately. Donations may be made to the AMAA, designated to the Central High School in Beirut, or the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago. □



Vicken Y. Mazmanian

Vicken Y. Mazmanian of Riverside, CT passed away peacefully at home on May 1, 2021 at the age of 72.

Vicken was born in 1949 in Beirut, Lebanon to Elizabeth and Mihran Mazmanian. At just 4 years old, he lost his father to a heart attack and was raised by his mother, one block away from our home.

At 17, Vicken moved to Montreal in search of new life and opportunity. He attended George Williams University (currently Concordia University) for three years. His college life was interrupted as he had to go to Beirut to attend a family business.

While in Beirut, he attended Haigazian College and earned his Bachelor's degree in Physics in 1971.

He returned to Montreal to work for a few years. Concurrently, his family members had moved to NJ, where he rejoined them. In NJ Vicken attended Armenian Presbyterian Church (APC) of Paramus and got involved with the Church, as a volunteer Sunday School teacher and Youth Group Leader. Vicken was very pleasant to be around, always smiling, joyous, funny, easy to talk to, readily available to help.

As we were neighbors back in Beirut and attended the same Church, Vicken would come over our house, just for the purpose of playing with my baby sister Sossy in her crib, joking that one day he would marry her. As Sossy grew up, he would call her "Boubrig" (doll).

When we moved to NJ in the mid-70s, we attended APC where Vicken met his "Boubrig" again and they were married in 1978 and after a few years their son Mark was born.

Vicken was in love with Physics and made it his professional career. He was an excellent teacher and received numerous awards. He also co-authored Physics textbooks and self-authored a book titled Facts, Fallacies, and Fiction of Force. During his teaching career at Greenwich High School in CT, Vicken attended Columbia University, and was awarded a Ph.D. in Education of physics in 1995.

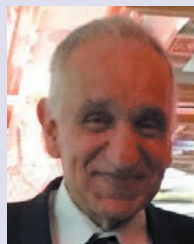
After his tenure as a high school teacher, Vicken taught at the American University of Kuwait, followed by Balamand University in Lebanon, and then the U.S. Air Force Academy in Denver, CO. After his return to the US, he sought to teach at universities closer to his home until his health forced him to finally retire 4 months before his passing.

Vicken is survived by his wife Sossy and son Mark whom he loved the most, his lovely sister Sylvia, brother-in-law Michel, and his dear brother Varouj.

Vicken's funeral was held on May 8 at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus. Memorial donations were designated to AMAA earmarked for the Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Anjar, Lebanon and APC.

Rest in peace my dear brother.

By Berjouhy Barsoumian



Hilda Ohanessian

Hilda Ohanessian of Glendale, CA, passed away March 11, 2021 at Saint John's Hospital due to a stroke and other medical complications. She was 88.

Hilda was born April 14, 1933 to Simon and Mary Havounjian. She was one of five siblings, Edward, Elizabeth, Zaven and Seda. When Hilda was 12 years old, her family moved to Beirut, Lebanon. Just a year after this move, much like many other Armenians living in the Diaspora, the family immigrated to Armenia.

At the age of 17 Hilda married Arsen Der-Ohanessian. Although married, she did not want to give up on her studies and insisted on pursuing her education in chemistry and biology. Shortly after, she gave birth to her son, Norayr and four years later, she was blessed with her second child Marine. Like many Armenian mothers, family and children were the center of her life. She was always nurturing, protecting and encouraging them to get the best education.

As conditions became more difficult during the Soviet era, the family decided to follow the footsteps of their Uncle Dr. Krikor Ohanessian to immigrate to the United States. In 1980 they arrived in Los Angeles to start a new life.

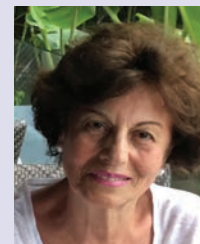
A staunch supporter of her husband, Hilda joined him to help start their jewelry manufacturing business in Downtown Los Angeles. They both believed in working hard, and they also believed in enjoying life, which they did wholeheartedly as they traveled around the world.

Hilda and Arsen were blessed to see their children start their own families. In 1981, Marine married Hratch and in 1986 Norayr married Nancy. Hilda and Arsen later became grandparents to Rubina, Giorgio, Sabina and Gabriella. Their grandchildren were the center of their universe and watching them grow and flourish was a source of joy to them.

Hilda's life changed in 2011, when she lost her husband of 51 years. Although this was a devastating time, being surrounded by her children and grandchildren helped. Her most recent learning venture was the world of social media. Most recently, Armenia's politics, economy, and the Artsakh war became a center of her focus. Every day she would talk about the happenings in the Homeland and prayed for God's help and for a peaceful resolution of the war.

During the last few years, her health started to deteriorate. However, she was always optimistic and prayerful that she would never become a burden to her children in her old age.

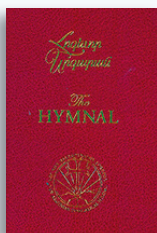
Memorial donations are designated to AMAA for "Children of Fallen Heroes." □



AMAA Bookstore - Featured Books



**Armenian English Diglot
New Testament**
*Western Armenian and
Today's English version.*
Item # 508 - Price: \$15.00



**The Hymnal (*Hokevor
Yerkaran*)**
Հոգևոր Երգարան
Bilingual Hymns
Item # 353 - Price: \$30.00



**History of the Armenian
Evangelical Churches of
North and South America**
*History of AEUNA churches,
their founders, locations,
pastors, leaders, and programs.*
Published by AEUNA
Item # 401CO - Price: \$10.00



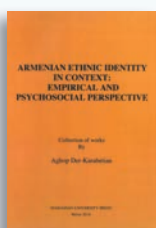
**A Century of Armenian
Protestantism 1846-1946**
(Second Printing)
*The author recounts the
history of the Armenian
Evangelical movement
from its beginning to 1946.*
By Leon Arpee
Item # 365 - Price: \$15.00



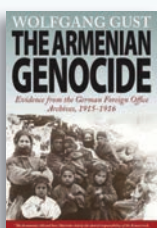
**A History of Armenian
Christianity (Second
Printing)**
*A fairly objective overview
of the Christian pilgrimage
of the Armenian people
throughout the centuries.*
By Leon Arpee
Item # 366 - Price: \$25.00



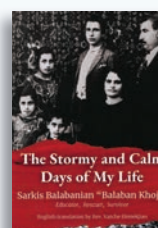
**The Genesis and Early
Development of the Armenian
Missionary Association of America**
History of the founding of the AMAA.
By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian
Item # 403 - Price: \$20.00



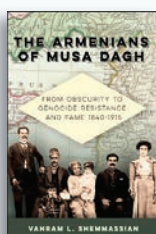
**Armenian Ethnic Identity
in Context: Empirical and
Psychosocial Perspective**
Collections of Works
By Aghop Der-Karabetian
Item # 404CO-HU
Price: \$20.00
All proceeds will go to
Haigazian University.



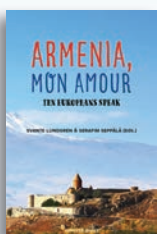
The Armenian Genocide
*Evidence from the German
Foreign Office Archives,
1915-1916.*
**Compiled and edited by
Wolfgang Gust**
Item # 349 - Price: \$75.00



**The Stormy and Calm
Days of My Life**
Educator, Rescuer, Survivor.
Sarkis Balabanian (Balaban Khoja)
Translated by Rev. Vatche Ekmekjian
Item # 406 - Price: \$20.00
All Proceeds go to AMAA Balabanian
Ed. Fund

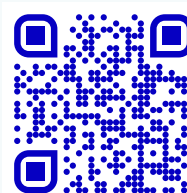


**The Armenians of Musa
Dagh: From Obscurity
to Genocide Resistance
and Fame 1840-1915**
**By Vahram
Shemmashian, Ph.D.**
Item # 408 (paper back) -
Price: \$30



Armenia Mon Amour
*Ten non-Armenian friends
of Armenia describe their
love for this country.*
**By Svante Lundgren &
Serafim Seppälä (Eds.)**
Item # 409 - Price: \$30.00

Scan here to visit
the bookstore and
order your books

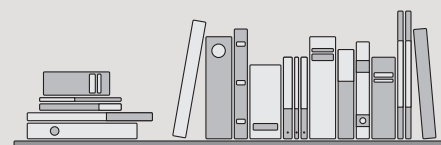


For a complete listing of our Bookstore items and for orders, please visit www.amaa.org/bookstore or contact AMAA Bookstore: 201.265.2607

Received With Thanks

The AMAA acknowledges with gratitude receipt of the following new publications

THE RESISTANCE NETWORK: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918
By Khatchig Mouradian



AMAA SUMMER CAMPS



IN ARMENIA+ARTSAKH 2021

SUMMER CAMP

is a wonderful opportunity for children and teens to make friends, spend time outdoors and learn new skills. Many kids have missed out on a lot of these opportunities during the Pandemic. After much consideration and planning, AMAA is excited to announce that camps will be open in Armenia and Artsakh this summer.

After a long, stressful year, AMAA's summer camps will allow campers to escape their impoverished daily routines and be exposed to programs which foster positivity, self-esteem, confidence and most importantly spiritual nourishment.

Through the kindness of our donors, the AMAA operates the overnight Camp Sheen-Shoghig in Hankavan and 25 regional day camps in Armenia. While a location is still being determined for the day camp in Artsakh, over 300 children and youth are expected to participate.

Scan here to
learn more about
Summer Camps



Please help AMAA continue giving children some much-needed summer fun! Support the AMAA Camp Program.

A GIFT OF \$70 WILL HELP ONE CHILD BE ABLE TO ATTEND AN OVERNIGHT CAMP FOR ONE WEEK.
A GIFT OF \$40 WILL HELP A CHILD ATTEND A DAY CAMP FOR ONE WEEK.

THEY WILL NEVER FORGET YOUR GENEROSITY OR THE POSITIVE IMPACT YOU WILL HAVE ON THEIR YOUNG LIVES.

YES! I WANT TO HELP CHILDREN IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH ATTEND AMAA SUMMER CAMPS!

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

for: _____ Children @ \$70 each for overnight camps _____ Children @ \$40 each for day camps

Name: _____ Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make check payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America - memo: Armenia Summer Camps and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or make a secure online donation at www.amaa.org

Scan here to
donate online





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Armenian Evangelical Bethel School of Aleppo, Syria, established in 1923 in a wooden hall with classrooms separated by mere curtains. Standing at back is Hovhannes Haidostian, founder and Head Master of the School.